ART AND LETTERS

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ART AND LETTERS



NORINE

FIRST LETTER

To Monsieur Prosper Arribas, Officiating Curé at Rocaillet.

I

August 1887.

" ....Do you remember, my friend, our delightful trip to Truscas, about the middle of June 1842? How light-hearted we were! How full of spirits! You were not then Curé of the parish of Rocaillet, in the diocese of Montpellier, nor was I keeper of the Mazarin library, in Paris.

" My uncle Fulcran had said to us the evening before :

" ' My dear boys, his reverence Vicar-General Pénicault, wrote me yesterday that Monsignor, on a pastoral visitation among our mountain country, would arrive at Camplong on Friday to hold a confirmation, and that I was to take steps to give his lordship a seemly welcome. ' Seemly ' is easily said. My poor housekeeper is at her wits' end, and I, too, am inclined

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to lose my head a little. Had Monsignor Thibault proposed to honour me with a visit on a feast day, two or three plump chickens out of the poultry-yard, a leg of mutton from Salase's the butcher's, a skewerful of young birds, trapped by the Bassacs' shepherd, Galibert, with the sauces Prudence would have been able to serve it all up in, would have made up a mighty 'seemly' meal, in the phrase of his reverence Vicar-General Pénicault. But what can I do on a fast-day, a Friday? Prudence has been on the verge of tears, and I was by no means comfortable while she was so put out. Only fancy, my children, that I, the parishpriest with the fattest living in the canton, should be forced to regale Monsignor with nothing but eggs, potatoes, beans and spinach, all dishes unworthy of his exalted station in the Church, of his rank as bishop 'ministering round the Pontifical Throne.' Bassac saw our despair and has been our salvation. It seems there is at Truscas, barely two leagues from here, a man named Joseph Cabassol who is a great trout fisher. Cabassol knows all the haunts of these fish hidden under big stones at the bottom of the river Orb; he thrusts in his hand and the trout find themselves more surely caught between his fingers than in the meshes of a net. Prudence shall give you a basket and you will both of you be off to-morrow morning to Truscas. I will provide you with a letter for the Curé of the place, his reverence Abbé Papillon, one of my old classmates at the High Seminary. M. Papillon, whom I am inviting to our ceremony, where he will have the opportunity of receiving Monsignor's blessing, will see after the ordering of the trouts from Joseph Cabassol, defray the cost of the order on my behalf, lodge you, and send you back to Camplong on Thursday, the day after to-morrow. During your little trip, I shall not be inactive : I shall go to Graissessac, to borrow from my fellow-parson, worthy M. Alexandre Matheron, five or six bottles of his old Fougères wine; then I shall extend my journey as far as Saint-Étienne-de-Mursan to beg his reverence the Curé Victor Beaumel to lend me his silver-clasped case, with its four magnificent cut-glass bottles containing liqueurs, which I have never tasted, but are reputed exquisite. I hardly fancy, indeed, that Monsignor drinks either 'fine champagne,' curaçao, chartreuse, or anisette; but, anyhow, his lordship will be convinced that I have done my very best to give

him the welcome he deserves. Till to-morrow morning, then, my boys.'

"I don't know, my dear Arribas whether the prospect of an excursion, all by ourselves, to Truscas let you sleep peacefully in your house on the bank of the river Espase, in the hamlet of Les Passettes. At the parsonage I, for my part, could not close my eyes. I twisted and turned in my bed fearfully. In vain did I try to calm myself by reciting *Souvenez-vous, Marie*... over and over again; it was of no use. Truscas where I had never set foot, Truscas, at two leagues' distance from Camplong—at the other end of the world—occupied my mind, my whole being. The dawn at length filtered through the slits in my bed-room shutters. I leapt like a young kid on my clothes and shoes.

II

"You were late, my friend. You can guess how cross I was! While waiting for you, I dipped long slices of bread in a cup of 'racahout' and hastily swallowed them. This 'Arabian racahout,' made by Prudence out of corn-flour, chocolate, and a pinch of Indian salep, was an expensive affair, and only on grand occasions was I allowed a taste of the delicious compound, of which my uncle took three mouthfuls every morning after mass. The receipt came from the famous Doctor Barascut, of Bédarieux. I have since noticed that, to appreciate the true flavour of a thing, you have to pay some slight attention to it, to give your thoughts to it a little; now, as I could think of nothing but Truscas, and was solely occupied for the moment with you, M. Barascut's 'racahout' went down without producing any effect on my palate, without my savouring its taste. My uncle and Prudence, enchanted to see me enjoying (as they thought) the treat, followed me about with their eyes, and kept whispering together with smiles, while I, ungrateful fellow that I was, gulped down my dainty like a glutton, sparing them neither word nor smile.

"At the last moment you put in an appearance. Our clock was striking eight. 'Arribassou,' our housekeeper, said to you, calling you by the gentle diminutive for your name, 'here is a basketful of provisions for your journey, I have put two goats' milk cheeses inside, a bit of sausage, six *gimblettes,* six hard biscuits——'

"'Above all, my children,' interposed my uncle, 'let me impress upon you, if you should be thirsty on the way, not to go drinking, at any rate out of the Cérisoles brook, near Rocaillet. The Cérisoles water is melted snow; it runs down straight from the Espinouze; it is icy and very dangerous—— Now, my dear boy,' added he for my own particular behoof, handing me a paper folded in four, 'here is the letter for his reverence Abbé Papillon.'

"He gave me a hearty squeeze. From his arms I fell into Prudence's.

"We sped away from the parsonage.

"What splendid weather it was! The sun, from above the Jougla chestnut-groves all in flower, was darting its first rays, vaporous, light and kindly rays, into the depths of the Espase valley, and here and there lit up the river through the willows and poplars. The five or six roofs of Les Passettes were gleaming. The air was fresh, a calm over everything. All of a sudden—I should much like to know how the thing came about—our mouths opened and we fell to singing. I, the child of the parsonage, brought up in admiration of the anthems, chants, hymns, and psalms of the *Graduel,* struck up the *In exitu Israël de Ægypto;* you, the child of the Passettes farm, more familiar with village ballads than church canticles, filled the echoing air with these two couplets, which fell on my ears between the verses of my psalm, and which you will perhaps be fairly scandalised to renew acquaintance with here :

Garçons et fillettes
S'en allaient aux prés
Tout près,
Cueillir des noisettes
Le long du ruisseau,
Sur l'eau.
Jean dit à Jeanille :
Quand je t'embrassais
Tout près,
Tu fus bien gentille
Le long du ruisseau
Sur l'eau——

"Well, your reverence of Rocaillet, what do you think of this sample of homely rhyme in which your younger years delighted? You are blushing, my old friend, I feel confident. I assure you you have nothing

to blush for. Arribassou, following the course of the Espase with a basket under his arm, Arribassou, tall, lanky, tough as a shoot of a wild chestnut-tree, waking the morning air, and driving off the startled birds with some tuneful pastoral refrain or other, was no less pure, no less religious to my mind than is the respectable Abbé Arribas, officiating minister of Rocaillet, whose voice is nowadays acquainted only with the plain-song of the Antiphonary and the Latin words at the foot of the stave. For my part, I watched you as you walked ahead and I admired you, for I thought you a fine fellow. My uncle, fearing lest I should find the village dull, had given you to me for a friend, and I was proud to see you, to grasp your hand from time to time, to listen to you, and to talk to you in my turn.

"For another thing, in 1842, you were close on fifteen while I was not much more than twelve. In my eyes, your age made you my superior. Then you were so strong, so kind, so *amiteux,* to use a charming word of that part of the country. So God, who had designs upon you, while despite my pious childhood I wandered at hap-hazard seeking my own way, took you by the hand and ended by binding you to himself and keeping you. God did well to choose you and to leave me alone.

III

"We were scarcely going as the crow flies. Now, we left the narrow path between two walls of eglantine and ventured along goat-tracks skirting the projections of the Bataillo Rock; anon, we struck without scruple across a field of rye, knocking off more ears than one, letting our tongues chatter just like a brace of red partridges chattering with their beaks. You led the way no matter where; I followed you no matter where, happy to be at your heels. Often you would turn round to make sure I was there and would sign to me to come along. How I flew to get by your side! We had passed beyond the Bataillo Rock, we had emerged from the huge clumps of tall fern growing in the breaches and crevices of the gigantic block and were speeding along without looking to our feet, when a flock of crested larks rose in front of us. You threw stones at them, while, thunderstruck, I watched them fly off, their crest

stiff with fear, and listened to their twittering, till they were out of sight.

"Hullo! I caught sight of some scattered houses under chestnut-trees stripped bare by old age.

"'What is that place, Arribassou?' I asked you.

"'Rocaillet.'

"'Do you know any one there?'

"'The first house in the village is Justin Lebasset's. I know Justin Lebasset. He used to come working at our place every year at chestnut-gathering time; but he has not been to Les Passettes this year.'

"'And why has he not been there?'

"'Egad! Because he was in prison, I dare say——'

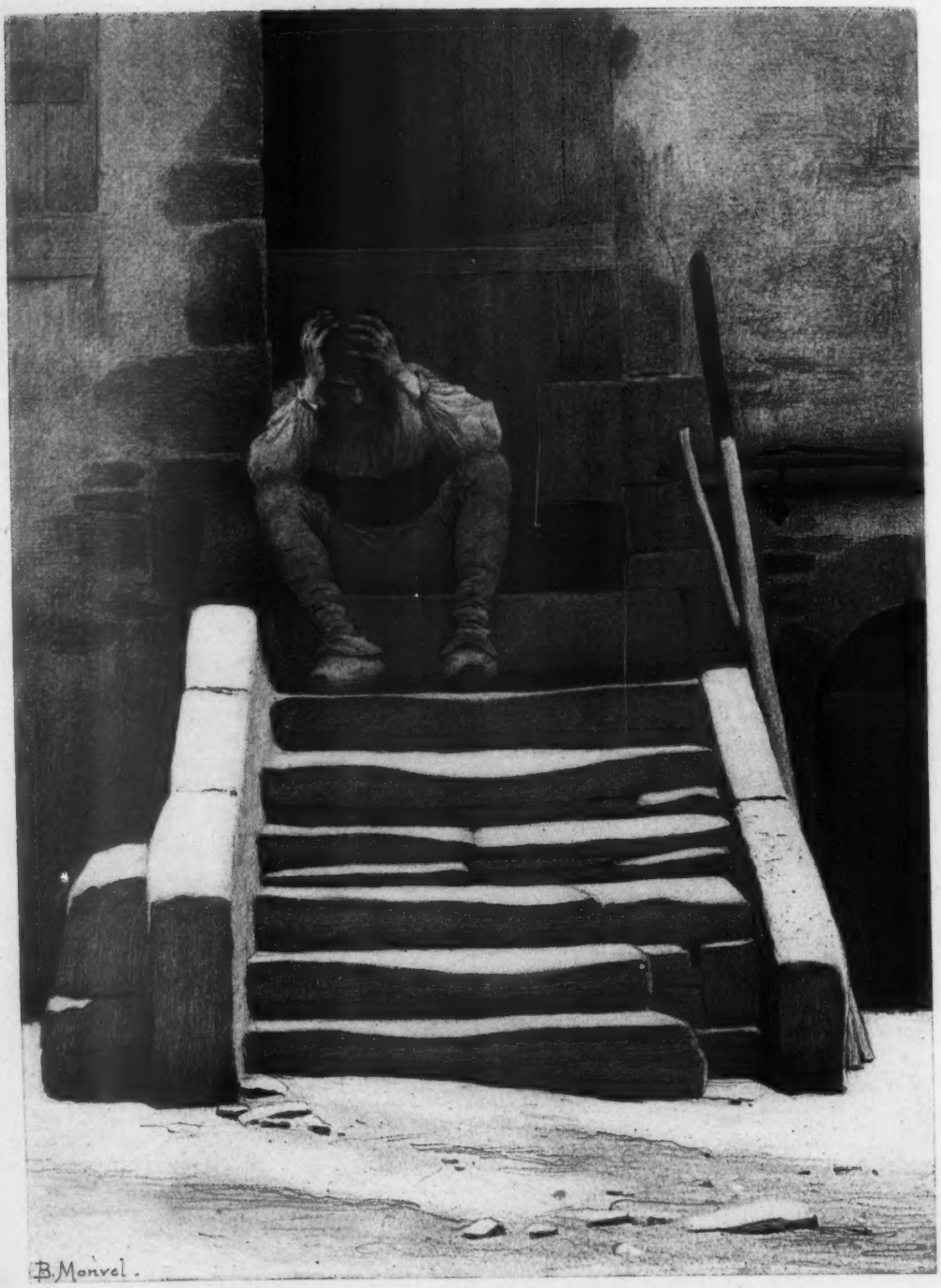
"'In prison!' I cried, not without dismay—— 'So Justin Lebasset is a thief, then?'

"'Yes, and a thorough one.'

"'What has he done?'

"'At night-time he would slip into the granaries and rob us of, now one, now two, now three sacks of our finest *Jeanne-longue* chestnuts. Siebel the hawker informed against him, and if it had not been for your uncle's continual pleading, 'Mercy for the sinner! Mercy for the sinner!' my father would have handed him over to the gendarmes at Saint-Gervais. Now, they say, he has left Rocaillet, where every one avoided him. What has become of him? Have the gendarmes clapped the handcuffs on him somewhere or other? Very likely—— No they haven't, you cried with a sudden choking of the voice, 'there he is sitting at his own doorstep.'

"Within gunshot, in fact, at the top of a flight of six steps, a man was crouching. As he was motionless we could see his hands were buried in a stiff and woolly shock of red hair. Impossible to make out his features. At the sound of our footsteps, he lifted his head. Ah! It was a villainous cast of countenance, indeed! An unkempt beard, red as fire, completely ate up and burned into his face. He rose at our approach, and a gleam from his fierce eyes, darting through the brushwood covering his mouth and chin, beat full upon us. It pierced me through and through, and I would willingly have taken to my heels.


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You came to a halt; then, boldly facing this wild beast, who would have made little of devouring us :

"'Do you want anything more?' you said to him.

"'Yes,' stuttered the man, 'I want to shake the vermin out of you.'

"Straightway he came two steps lower.

"'Help! Help!' I bellowed with all my might.

"Lebasset stood stock-still.

"'You are only children,' he got out with an effort, 'and I shan't touch children. My grudge is against Siebel, first of all, and next against your father, Arribassou. Just recommend them, when they come into the Espinouze country, one to sell his wares, and t'other to hire hands for the farm, to mind and steer clear of Rocaillet.'

"He mounted the steps again and disappeared inside the house, slamming the door behind him.

"We resumed our journey, much excited, but well pleased that the last word had been said between Justin Lebasset and ourselves.

"All the same I was surprised that my cry of distress had not echoed more loudly under the old Rocaillet chestnut-trees. The village, then, was deserted? Suppose this frightful Justin Lebasset, who seemed not more than twenty and as strong as a pollard-oak, had taken it into his head to break our limbs or cut us to pieces? I must say, I wondered, while I was still trembling under the shock, at finding you, after a movement that had turned you a little pale, suddenly as calm again as though nothing had happened.

"'I hope,' said I, 'that on our way back from Truscas, we shall not pass through Rocaillet again? You must know some other road?——'

"'I know two others, but they are not such good fun as this.'

"'Oh, if you find this good fun!——'

"'You will see, when we get to Les Cérisoles.'

"'You know Uncle Fulcran has forbidden us to drink out of the brook at Les Cérisoles.'

"'But he has not forbidden us to eat the cherries.'

"'There are cherries there?'

"'Yes, and the best, biggest and juiciest in the Cévennes. It's the

plentifulness of the cherries *(cerises)* that has given the place the name *Cérisoles*—— But there is Honorine Jalaguier coming down from the moors with her goats.—Norine! Norine!'

IV

"About a hundred yards ahead of us, at the other end of a rocky slope, a tall lass turned towards us. Leaning with her left hand on her goat-herd's stick which reached above her head, she screened her eyes with her right and gazed in our direction. While she was trying to make out who we were, a score of goats frisked round her under the chestnut-trees.

"'It's only us, Norine,' you shouted: 'Arribassou and the nephew of his reverence the Curé of Camplong.'

"She came running to us at full speed, making a pretty clatter among the pebbles with her sabots, and followed pell-mell by her flock.

"I knew Honorine Jalaguier. Famous for her pluck through the length and breadth of the Cévennes mountain-side, she was never at a loss for work. In the chestnut season the only question was who should be the first to hire her, and the previous year, she had worked at the Arribases'. During her three months' sojourn at Les Passettes farm, she had come more than once to take the Sacrament, and, waiting on my uncle at mass. I had noticed this Cérisoles maiden at the Altar, where she was a perpetual subject of edification for our parish; I say ours, for my uncle's parish was in a way *our* parish, Prudence's and mine. She seemed to me grown, in her petticoat of coarse cloth too short for her, but a little pale and somewhat downcast. You yourself were struck with the change. Hardly had she come up to us when you said:

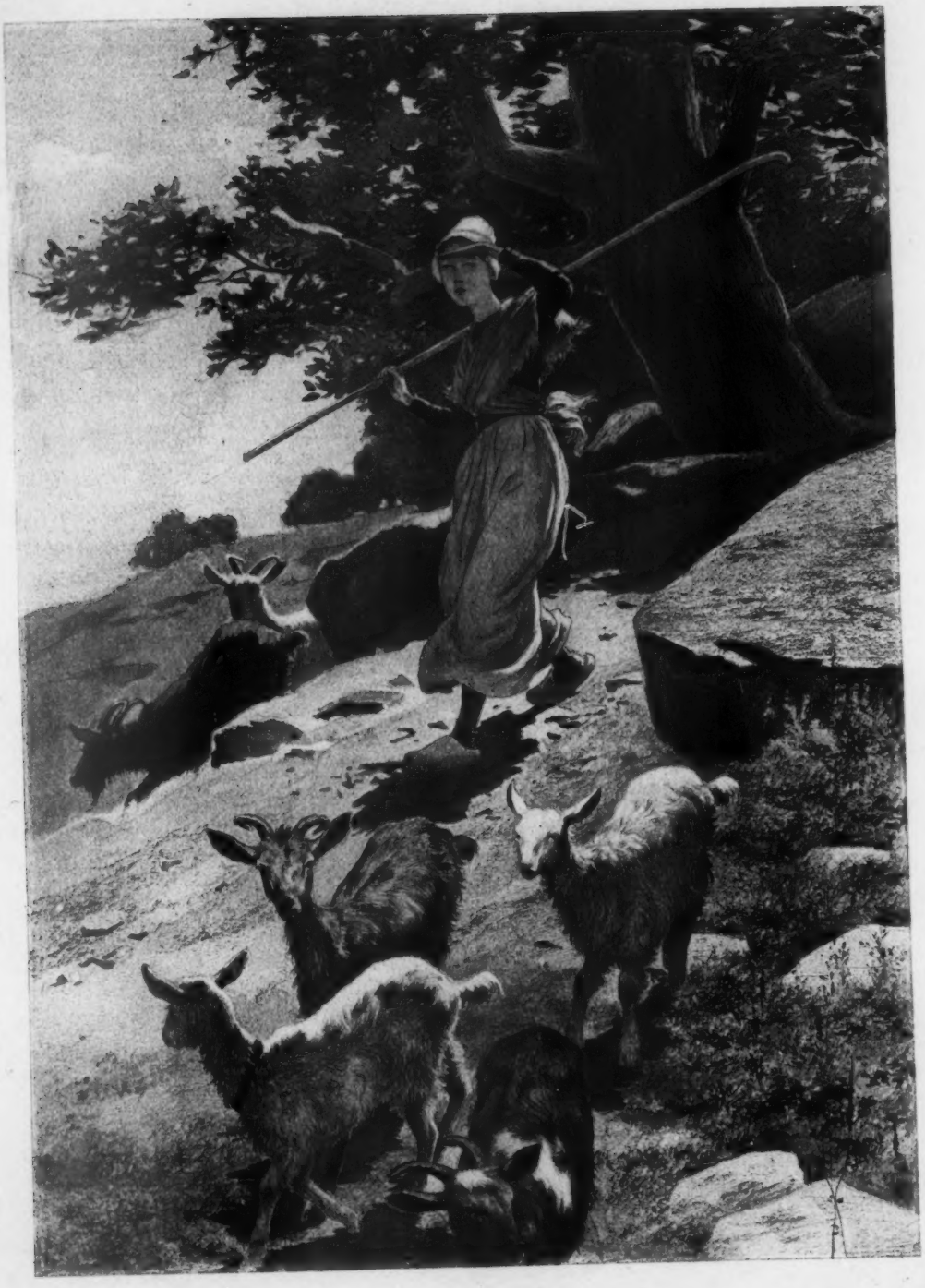
"'Are you ill, Norine?'

"'Oh! no, Arribassou.'

"'You look to me a bit thinner than you were with us, at Les Passettes.'

"'That's because I'm growing, no doubt.'

"'You are shooting up, to be sure, shooting up like a white-willow wand on the bank of the Espase.'



"'I don't know anything about that,' she murmured, with a slight blush. Then, with less muffled accents, and a more open face, 'Were you coming to the Cérisoles, Arribassou?'

"'No, we are going to Truscas to get some trout at Joseph Cabassol's——'

"'Monsignor is to confirm the children of the parish on Friday,' I added, 'and we can only give him trout to eat on that day.'

"'Monsignor!' she cried clasping her hands together.

"I took advantage of this feverish movement, which made Honorine Jalaguier look like many of the Saints in my favourite prints, above all like Sainte Germaine, the shepherdess of Pibrac, near Toulouse, and with an air of wisdom and importance, I put this question :

"'How old are you, Norine?'

"'I shall be eighteen, come next Assumption Day, master nephew.'

"'I presume that at your age you have been confirmed?'

"'Oh! yes, master nephew, I was confirmed at Saint-Gervais, three years ago, by Monsignor's own hands.'

"'That's right, Norine, quite right of you.'

"'And won't you stop a minute or two at Les Cérisoles, master nephew?' she asked, as we gave signs of resuming our journey.

"'Why should we stop at Les Cérisoles?' said I with the touch of haughtiness befitting my situation as nephew of the Curé Fulcran, revered like a saint in his own parish and the parishes all round.

"'We have some splendid cherries just now, and when you have been walking in the sun, a handful of cherries freshened in our brook——'

"'All right, we'll come,' said you, interrupting her.

"For the goat-herd to gather her scattered flock together and to guide them into taking our path was the work of a moment. They set off, each at the other's tail, in Indian file, fed with fresh fodder, with no further thought beyond rest, the luxurious, ruminating rest of their sties. As for us, we had left the clumps of chestnut-trees and the sun, which doubtless had something to do with the quickened pace of the goats, covering us from head to foot with burning kisses, forced us to hurry our steps.

"We kept descending from the uplands towards a ravine in whose hollow we could hear the babble of running water. The brook of Les Cérisoles, no doubt. We caught sight of it, clear in spite of its turbulent flood, swirling amid big moss-grown stones, that seemed bent on disputing its passage. The sight was the first thing to refresh us. Suddenly we found ourselves once more in the shade, not the thick, black shade of groves of old chestnuts, but the soft, luminous shade of fruit-trees. At a sharp bend in the brook, whose turfy edge we were following, the country changed its aspect. It seemed to me a mass of red. Cherries in enormous bunches hung everywhere over-head.

"'How pretty! how pretty!' I murmured, in a transport.

"Honorine put up her hand and plucked a small branch, laden, studded with magnificent fruit.

"'Taste them, master nephew', she said, 'taste them.' Then pointing out to us a hovel buried in a cluster of foliage, at no great distance from the brook : 'That is the place we are going to.'

"You helped me so effectually to munch my cherries—bigaroons, heavy and firm—that not a single one was left on the branch when we reached the threshold of the Jalaguiers.

V

"We went in.

"The hut was somewhat low and dark. A chestnut log was burning to a mass of cinders, and a blazing fragment, fallen from the block, gleamed through a mass of smoking twigs. Everything was in its place : the table in the middle of the room, the chairs against the walls, the plates on the dresser-shelves; it was clear there was some reigning fairy in this hole, and her wand had called up all this order and neatness.

"'Is it you, Norine?' asked a voice from a very dark corner at three paces from the chimney.

"'Yes, grandfather. The heat was getting stronger every minute, so I brought the goats in.'

"'I thought I heard other steps as well as yours.'

"'Yes, grandfather, it is the nephew of his reverence the Curé of Camplong.'

"'Of his reverence the Curé Fulcran!' cried the voice. 'May Heaven grant him long life for his charity's sake.'

"Honorine threw open the shutters of a window that was itself hermetically closed. A flood of light spread over the hard earth of the floor like a white table-cloth. The hut was lit up from ground to ceiling. I saw an old man seated on a stool in a corner where a big hanging curtain of serge apparently concealed a bed. He was slightly bent, his two hands thrust forward, clasped over the ball of a knotty and brightly polished stick. Despite his eighty years—he appeared to be quite eighty—Honorine's grandfather, her *grand,* as they say in those parts, had not lost a single hair, and handsome white locks, slightly tinged with yellow, fell down upon his shoulders, thick, pointed, clustering, and entwined together. I thought of the lovely masses of hemp or broom threads with which our Prudence's distaff was always adorned. He was clean shaven, in the fashion of the peasantry in our country-side, who rarely let their beards grow in 1842, or thereabouts, and the whole visage was laid bare, in a fine freedom of outline, dominated by a good-sized nose beneath which smiled big lips full of kindness. But the eyes, albeit that they were clear and soft, had a kind of fixed look in them that frightened me.

"'So then, master nephew,' said he, 'you have come to Les Cérisoles?'

"Norine told him in a few words the object of our journey. At your name, Arribassou, the old man, under some painful feeling, bent his brow. Then in a tone vibrating with hearty joy :

"'Come, Norine, come my girl, be quick and fry some ham and eggs in the pan; we must put heart into these young people. They have still a fair stretch before them between here and Truscas. I want to take a glass with master nephew and with Arribassou. T'will make *me* young again, and won't age *them.* God be thanked! Here am I with visitors and junketing to-day at Les Cérisoles.'

"So saying, he rose upright. His height appeared to me excessive. He was really a fine sight with the content that shone in his countenance, straight, as he was, as the trunk of a chestnut-tree, his old velvet

waistcoat thrown back, his coarse brown linen shirt open at his breast letting the lines of the ribs be seen, like the curved branches of a tree.

"'Master nephew,' said he, shaking his head, 'where are you? Come to me, I am blind.'

"I went up to him. He felt me with his ten fingers, having laid down his stick.

"'And you would not be offended, would you, master nephew, if a poor peasant like me, old and infirm, took the liberty of embracing you.'

"'Offended, Jalaguier!' I said, throwing myself in his arms.

"He clasped me well-nigh tight enough to break my bones. Held against his broad, shaggy bosom, I could hear the throbbing of his heart; it beat under my ear as loudly as the clapper of our bell at Camplong. What powerful vitality in Honorine's grandfather!

"'A hearty hug does an old man good,' he continued as he released me. 'And then! I am under so many obligations to your uncle, master nephew! What would have become of us here for the last four months, since I have lost my wife, if his reverence the Curé Fulcran had not saved our brave Justin Lebasset, whom Jacques Arribas wanted to have arrested by the gendarmes and flung into prison? Arribassou, Justin never touched your *Jeanne-longue* chestnuts, and if your father doesn't know it already, tell him that Siebel the pedlar was convicted of theft this winter in Aveyron. Now he was at Les Passettes, was Siebel, at the time they accused Lebasset and you 'gave him the sack' at the farm. Every one on the mountain-side knows the life this wretch lives with Antoinette Vignole, of Camplong, a beggar-woman without honour and capable of everything, even of selling her own daughters like beasts out of a sty, sheep or goats. It was this woman Vignole of Camplong that ate your chestnuts, along with her brats.'

"'Grandfather! Grandfather!——' said Honorine, with ineffable gentleness.

"She took him by the hand and led him towards the table where the fried ham and eggs were hissing in an immense brown dish. All our stock of provisions; the slice of sausage, the two little cheeses, the six *gimblettes,* the six biscuits were spread out on the table-cloth,

making quite a grand show. Was it you, my friend, who had emptied the basket? So the reproaches of Barthélemy Jalaguier, that wholly upset me, had but a slight effect on you?

"'To your meal, my children, to your meal! And God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!'

"We all four signed ourselves, for grace, and sat down.

VI

"I couldn't say how you behaved yourself at the Jalaguiers' table, my dear Arribas. For my part, I ate like a wolf. After more than forty-five years—more than forty-five years, alack!—I can still taste the Cérisoles ham and eggs, flavoured with a dash of vinegar in the frying-pan. While my grinders were engaged in despatching the whole larderful of these worthy people, I raised my head now and then, chewing Gargantuan mouthfuls. At such times I took a look at the blind man seated opposite me, and I was astonished at the precision as well as the ease of his movements. Honorine, so as not to put the old fellow out in his habits, after unhooking a saucepan that hung suspended over the fire, had set before him a brimming plateful of soup. The old man's spoon stood upright in it.

"You could have heard a fly move, so deeply were we all busied with using our teeth. Among the peasants of our Cévennes a meal is what nature intended it to be : a rest after fatigue, a silent moment of a lofty, almost sacred character. The poor human creature has forced a hard soil to yield him his daily bread, with the sweat of his brow; now when he tastes the savour of that bread, he cannot but hold his peace and be thankful.

"Jalaguier persisted in refusing a bit of our sausage, that I had divided into four somewhat scanty portions; but finally I hit on such expressions of praise for Prudence's skill in these savoury matters, that he consented to taste it. My eloquent efforts failed, however, with Honorine, who, as far as that goes, had hardly touched a morsel while we were attacking everything, content to wait upon us, to hover incessantly round the table, light and lively as a butterfly.

"'Are you eating anything, Norine?' her grandfather would now and then ask her.

"'Yes, yes,' was the answer.

"'I don't seem to hear you eating.'

"'Oh, yes, I am!'

"'You see, my children, I have to question her like that, because as a rule, a mere crumb is enough for her, just as a grain is enough for a goldfinch in one of our cherry-trees. One musn't always be thinking of working, one must think of keeping one's strength up as well. You are too eager for work, my girl, and it is a mistake to try and get too much out of one's arms. Heaven, that fashions us at its will, has cut you out too closely after the pattern of your poor father. I never miss shewing my regret for that, in my prayers, day and night. My poor boy died of over-work. He could never sit still when there was a chance of picking up a few sous in the fields. The fields took hold of him and swallowed him up——'

"'Oh! grandfather! Oh! grandfather!——' interrupted the girl, her eyes suddenly bathed in tears.

"'Well, you are right, Norine, you are right, I oughtn't to be talking of what makes you sad. You want all your courage to hold your own against things, here. As for me, I am no longer of any use, I am the dead branch that has fallen from the tree and should be thrown into the fire without a second thought——'

"'You, grandfather! you!'

"The tears pouring down her face, she threw herself on the old man's neck; then came a sob from Jalaguier's deep chest. For a long time he clasped his grand-daughter close, then, with a caressing gesture, freeing himself from her arms :

"'Come, Norine, come!——' he stammered.

"'And what would become of me without you,' she sobbed. 'I have lost father, I have lost mother, I have only just lost grandmother——'

"'But you know well enough, my lass, that Heaven keeps some one in reserve for you——'

"'It's you, you, I want to keep.'

"'You will keep me, don't fear—— Still I should not be sorry, after our mourning for your grandmother is over, to see your arm tucked under the arm of a strong lad, hard-working like yourself, honest like yourself.'

"'Don't let us talk of that,' she murmured, jumping up with a sudden start, and turning towards the burnt-out fire to hide her face from us.

"This altogether unlooked-for scene did not put you at your ease, my friend, for you had left half your *gimblette* on the table; and Heaven knows how fond you were of Prudence's sugared *gimblettes*. As for myself, Jalaguier's words had altogether taken away my appetite, and it was not without an effort that I kept back my tears. He was quite in the right, was Honorine's grandfather, to be thinking, on the edge of the grave, of marrying his grandchild in order to procure her some support. For that matter, the girl was charming with her slender and supple figure, her magnificent fair hair falling straight down like the tresses of a saint, her eyes bluer than the snow-water of the Cérisoles brooklet, her slightly pale cheeks, like twin lilies; and mighty hard to please, and a fool to boot, would any peasant be on our Cévennes mountain-side, however well-lined his purse, who should refuse to wed her.

"'I don't know what girls are like in other countries,' the old man suddenly resumed, 'but you see how it is with them among ourselves. They take fright as soon as there is any talk of their being married. And when you have found a good match, an excellent match for them too!——'

"'So, Jalaguier, you have found an excellent match for Norine?' I ventured to enquire. 'How pleased my uncle Fulcran will be, who——'

"'Do you want any cherries, Norine?' asked some one who appeared at the door of the hut, half-hidden from head to foot under branches gleaming with ripe fruit.

"'Is that you my boy? my son!' cried the old man, straightway starting up and making in the direction of the voice. 'Yes, we do want some cherries—— So come along in with you! Come along!'

"He entered, and in spite of the foliage that covered him up, I recognized Justin Lebasset.

VII

"At the voice of the new comer Honorine had turned round, and when he came inside the house, she made a hesitating step towards him.

"'Why, you have brought me a whole tree,' she said, looking at him with big blue eyes full of delight.

"He was dumb for three seconds, then he got out with difficulty :

"'My own cherries are fuller than yours, and as you have company, I have picked a few for you and your guests.'

"'You are always kindness itself—— thank you.'

"And laying the branches, as she took them from him, one by one, on the table :

"'By the way, Justin, it seems you came and helped grandfather to get up?'

"'You were looking after your goats in the moors and no one knew whether you would be housing them early or late. I offered your grandfather, as he was prevented by his want of sight from putting his hand on the things he wanted, to help him a bit, and he let me. Besides I was passing this way——'

"'Yes, you pass this way every time we have need of some service.'

"In truth, it was no longer Justin Lebasset, the bear I had seen on entering Rocaillet, doubled up in front of his cavern, with his paws buried in his fur. The Justin Lebasset I saw by the side of Honorine was a man, rough on the outside, if you like, rough in aspect, but a man like other men, better than other men, perhaps. He did not stir, plunged as he was in a sort of ecstasy and the girl, seemingly fascinated, did not stir either. All of a sudden—how it came about I know not, my dear Arribas—you gave way to a splendidly hearty impulse. You thrust your chair back, stood steadily on your feet, and said to Lebasset :

"'Justin, they have accused you falsely at our place. It is not you who were guilty, but that wretch of a Siebel. My father shall know everything, and if it suits you in the season to return for the chestnut-picking to Les Passettes, you shall have a warm welcome at the farm.'

"No words could give any idea of the effect produced by this speech of yours delivered with a sturdy air of intense conviction. Not only did Justin Lebasset, under his red beard, turn paler than our table-cloth just taken from the press, but he fell to trembling in all his limbs and so hard that Honorine, her soul going out to him, just had time to reach him a chair and to make him sit down. An instant of hesitation on her part and he would have dropped on the floor.

"While the young peasant was recovering from a shock of emotion that had floored him in spite of his twenty years, of his muscles in full vigour, of his short closely-knit frame, whose strength betrayed itself to the merest glance, we were all silent and embarrassed, with our eyes fixed on the ceiling.

"'Come, my children, begin the cherries, these fine cherries of Justin's!' said old Jalaguier.

"As I stretched out my hand, the branches lying on the table were swept away in one armful.

"'If you want a feast fit for a king, you must freshen up the cherries in the brook!' cried Lebasset, coming to himself again, and hurrying out of the Jalaguiers' dwelling.

"With her forefinger to her lips, in an attitude of reflection, Honorine cast a timid, wild look at us. Then she suddenly plucked up courage and made off, with this little speech :

"'I can't do less than shew him the deepest place in the brook——'

"The deepest place in the brook, Justin Lebasset, born at Rocaillet, at three hundred paces from Les Cérisoles, was assuredly well aware of, but it had seemed meet to the fair goat-herd to shew it to the young fellow, and in spite of our presence, without affectation, she took to her heels after him.

"Guessing by what force, irresistible as instinct itself, his little maid had been carried away, Barthélemy Jalaguier smiled indulgently with a mischievously knowing air.

"'Hark you, my children,' was his comment, 'the Curés may say what they like, youth will always be youth, and nothing can ever prevail against it. Time out of mind, young folk have looked at one another,

spoken, and made friends, and they will go on looking, speaking, and making friends till the end of time. When life is just a-flowering, there must needs be a bursting of bonds. 'Tis God's pleasure that it should be so at such a moment, the finest moment in all existence.'

"Upon my word, I pulled rather a long face at this scarcely edifying speech, a speech by no means in harmony with the current doctrines at the parsonage, whether Prudence's or Uncle Fulcran's. But you began to laugh and I at once felt reassured. Since the words of Honorine's grandfather amused you, they could in no way be dangerous for us, I must have misunderstood them, they could not have the sense I ascribed to them.

"'So, Jalaguier, you have no fear lest a maiden, finding herself alone with a youth——' I began.

"'No fear at all.'

"'Yet Uncle Fulcran and our Prudence at the parsonage hold that girls are meant to keep with girls and boys with boys, that the two sexes should be kept apart unless you want to expose them—— to expose them——'

"'We all behave ourselves as we ought, over here.'

"'What a comfort for his reverence the Curé of Rocaillet. At Camplong, it happens as often as not that if a girl is inadvertently left alone with a boy, the latter is tempted by some demon into kissing her before long. What wickedness my poor uncle is plagued with in his parish, to be sure!'

"Hereupon, you began laughing once more, and the old man followed suit, so as to fill me with confusion. I began to breathe hard, ashamed without quite knowing why, and feeling myself getting just the least bit in a rage. All my notions about life were becoming mixed up. In that little box of a parsonage at Camplong, a box almost as sacro-sanct as a tabernacle, they had manufactured a moral standard for me, all complete, and of a special make, and the least breath from outside disturbed me to the pitch of bringing tears into my eyes.

"'Master nephew, will you help me to go and take my seat on the doorstep?' the old man asked me.

"With something of an ill grace I took Barthélemy Jalaguier's hand and drew him towards me a little more sharply than was necessary.

VIII

"A rough-hewn stone was fixed against the wall on the outside of the house. Then we all three sat down. The spot, half-abandoned and a bit wild as it was, seemed delicious in the cool shade afforded by two enormous intertwined fig-trees. The fleshy leaves of these fine trees, opulent in bark and branches, interposed an insurmountable barrier between us and the sun's rays. How pleasant it was! Fruit of a dark green, almost black, colour peeped out here and there in clusters of fives and of tens; unhappily they were not yet ripe. Along certain of the lower boughs my searching eye ferreted out little dried-up excrescences, a sort of brownish points, or warts. Each one of these dried excrescences had borne a fig-flower, one of those spring figs, swollen with the first juice, that now and then come to a huge size with us. Nature is so generous in her expansion, after the hard shackles of winter! It was in vain I searched among the thick leafage, the darkest and remotest recesses, not the tiniest fig-flower could I find to get a bite at. The season was over.

"All the time, Barthélemy Jalaguier, with his back to the wall, his hands on his knees, and his head bent forward in a pose of attention, seemed to be gazing at the high chestnut-groves round about, and uttered never a word. There was one thing that had struck me just now when I had been sitting opposite the old man at table; the extremely limpid look of his eyes, which were as clear and pure as a child's, as your own, Arribas, that used to be the most beautiful eyes in the world. I had been beset by doubts. Was Jalaguier blind? really blind?—These doubts again took hold of me.

"'Can't you see at all?'

"'Not at all, master nephew.'

"'You are quite sure of that, of course?'

"'At times, plunged in the dark as I am, a red bar suddenly passes before me. Then I fancy that it is night, that a star has appeared in

the sky, and that the next day I shall see the sun and the folk of the parish; but next day I see nothing, nothing, nothing.'

"'It's odd, but a moment ago I could have sworn that you were gazing, gazing, I mean, just as I might do, at the chestnut-groves across there at Rocaillet.'

"'I often turn that way from old habit. It would seem as though the peasant scents the earth on which he has spent his toil. I have given so much of my sweat to Rocaillet! Angélique, my wife, who is dead and gone, came from Rocaillet, and in marrying me, she brought me a few bits of ground in her apron. What state are they in now, I wonder, those poor little patches that we used to dig up and turn over with pick and shovel, my boy and I? What fine fields of vetches we had there, to make fodder for lambs and kids! All that has gone to ruin since my blindness, above all since Angélique left us for the cemetery, never to return.'

"He was silent, much to my delight, for every one of his sentences, which he intoned under the fig-trees more sadly than a priest intones the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah at a Good Friday service, upset me beyond measure.

"'Ah! How sorry I am for your sake, Jalaguier, how sorry I am!' I stammered, in the secret hope of ending the conversation.

"But having found ears apparently willing to listen to his complaints, he continued to pour out from his heart, as from an over-full vessel, the grief and bitterness with which he was brimming.

"'In the old times, you could eat your bread in peace at Les Cérisoles, and may be you might sometimes have a bit of butter to spread on it; nowadays, my Norine has to go and work for strangers, for bread is scarce at Les Cérisoles, and there is no longer a scrap of butter in the place. No doubt, Jacques Arribas of Les Passettes, and his reverence the Curé Fulcran of Camplong have shewn much kindness to my grandchild, at the last chestnut-picking. All the same, and notwithstanding that Justin Lebasset helped me during my child's long absence, I wept more than once, old man though I am, especially o'nights when the thought of my absent Norine would nip me harder than in the day-time. And

so I say before God, who hears me, even though we should have to crop the grass like our cattle, this year we will have no parting.'

"'You are right, Jalaguier,' said I, wiping my streaming eyes.

"Urged by a fearful longing to get away, I got up from the block of stone. The old man detected my movement.

"'What are you up to, master nephew?' said he.

"'It is getting late, Jalaguier, and I fancy we ought to be going.'

"'Set out again under this burning sun! Better wait till the air is a little cooler. You will reach Truscas in an hour's time. Besides, you must taste my cherries.'

"'Some other time, Jalaguier.'

"'So you insist absolutely on waking Arribassou?'

"'What! Is he asleep?'

"'Look in the grass!'

"From the stone bench, my dear friend, you had slid on to the thick turf under the shade of the fig-trees, and, weighed down by the eggs, the ham, the sausage, the cheese, the cakes, the biscuits, all very nice things but a trifle heavy, you had fallen asleep. I would not disturb your nap, and Barthélemy Jalaguier having sunk into a solemn silence, a silence full sad and even tragic withal, I began to move, wondering which way Honorine had gone to the Cérisoles brook in her flight after Justin.

IX

"Beyond the fig-trees, a narrow thorny path zigzagged among the tufts of purple heather, dotted here and there. Thick clumps of mint, with its bulging, shagreen-coloured, rough-coated leaf, grew in the spaces between, scenting the heavy air with their heady perfume. I went straight ahead, treading down the mint and the heather, whence there flew out legions of bees with a furious hum. A noise checked me. I pricked up my ears. The sound of talking came, clear and sharp, from behind a thick plantation of white willows. Honorine and Justin, no doubt. Why were they loitering in this way? What could they be saying to each other? The clear, sharp sound continued, but it was impossible

to distinguish a word. 'I only hope that Lebasset, who is no thief, I am quite willing to believe, is not playing the little Cérisoles goat-herd the scurvy trick of kissing her?' thought I. A sudden rush of outraged modesty gave me wings, and I flew towards the willows.

"Not a soul, alas! to be found. Ah! if I had only come upon them there and overheard the least word, seen the least gesture of a dubious kind, I would have given them a talking-to! In this hostile frame of mind into which I had been driven by that old dotard of a Jalaguier, with his indulgence for shameful goings-on between girls and boys, I was ready to throw myself upon them to separate them, were they only to shew so much as a sign of raising their arms towards one another for an embrace. After all said and done, my uncle's nephew, the parsonage-bred boy would shew himself at Les Cérisoles the same fellow he had shewn himself at Camplong, when, one Sunday after High Mass, Galibert, Churchwarden Bassac's shepherd, had rushed at Merlette, the daughter of Virginie Merle, and had smothered her cheeks in great kisses smacking more loudly than the popping of chestnuts in the fire. Galibert having committed this sin in less time than I have taken to describe it, I arrived too late; but all the same, as he was making off after his naughty trick, he got a stone from me on his right ankle that made him limp for more than a week. One for you, Galibert, you pest of Camplong parish!

"But, here, there was not the smallest stone for me to throw. The tattling I had overheard was not the tattling of tongues, but simply the chattering of the Cérisoles brooklet with the pebbles in its bed. Verily this brooklet, flowing in a winding channel, amid boulders clad in green moss and rounded like bowls for playing with, had a language, gave utterance to words, of its own. I took pleasure in listening awhile to these voices of the water, singing now more sweetly than the flutes of shepherds on the mountain-side, and anon with a note more shrill than the fifes that accompany in church the chant at the Elevation of the Host.

"This time, however, and no mistake, it is a word, a bit of genuine human speech that issues from the midst of the bushes bending over the brooklet. I brush aside a few twigs, prick up my ears and keep my



eyes open. I discover them, I see them, they are only three feet off me. Honorine, seated on a flattish boulder, is letting her feet hang in the water, while Lebasset, standing close by, is gazing, incessantly gazing at her. 'Yes Justin, yes Justin,' repeats Barthélemy Jalaguier's grandchild, whose face I can't clearly discern, turned, as it is, towards the brook.

"'How glad I am!' murmurs the young peasant, whom I no longer recognize, so changed do his features seem to me, so handsome almost, in spite of his rough beard, are they made by a sudden look that transfigures them like a gleam of sunlight.

"Honorine turns round. The twin lilies of her cheeks have given place to a pair of twin roses, two roses a little pale still, two Jougla hedge-roses, if you like. She has not a word to say, but contemplates Justin with half-closed, or well-nigh tight-shut eyes.

"'So then, you were afraid?' she asks him.

"'Yes, Norine, I was afraid of not succeeding in gaining your friendship.'

"'Why?'

"'You know very well——'

"'Do you think, then, I could ever have believed that horrid story of Les Passettes, as some wicked people at Rocaillet pretend to believe it?'

"'No. No!' he hastened to say—— 'You never believed it, you never will believe it, will you?'

"'Never!'

"She holds out her hand to him. Lebasset seizes the trembling hand, lays it against his heart, and the cry escapes him with a sob—'I am innocent!'

"The girl leaps up from her boulder, throws her arms round his neck and kisses him.

"I heard the smack of the Cérisoles goat-herd's kisses as plainly as I had heard the kisses of Galibert, Bassac's shepherd; but these kisses were assuredly not of the same nature, for, far from awakening an indefinable feeling of repulsion in me, they left me strangely moved and hesitating.

"'What should I have stolen any chestnuts for?' he continued, clutching Honorine with both hands. 'What could I have done with chestnuts?

I caught Siebel carrying off a sackful to Antoinette Vignole, and Siebel, afraid of my denouncing him, thought his safest course would be to accuse me instead.'

" 'Forget it, Justin——'

" 'When we are married, we will leave the place—— We will go right away—— I've a pair of strong arms, anyhow, and I am confident of earning, anywhere in the world, more bread than we shall ever want.'

" 'And grandfather?'

" 'We will take him with us.'

" 'He is old and blind—— We will stay for his sake.'

" 'As you will, Norine. So long as I have you to live with, it will be Paradise anywhere——'

" 'We are forgetting the cherries!' she cried, with a smile that I had never seen the like of among the girls of our parish, almost the smile of Sainte Philomène in her gilt shrine above the altar of her chapel, in our church at Camplong.

" They plunged their hands into the Cérisoles stream. Without being positively sure, I fancied I saw their fingers touching under the water. They drew out the cherry-laden branches and disappeared through the willows.

X

"My first impulse was to hurry after them and my legs started off of their own accord. But a single idea pulled me up short; if I were to reach the house the moment they did, should I not seem to have followed them, to have kept at their heels in order to watch and spy upon them. Generous-hearted as my parsonage training, despite its narrowness, had made me—that parsonage where the pure and generous lives of my uncle and Prudence were daily passed—I felt my cheeks burn with a flush of shame. Much put out, I stood stock-still by the Cérisoles brooklet, following with a sad and sombre gaze a few stray cherry-tree leaves that were being carried along by the stream, together with a cherry or two, gleaming on the surface of the water like rubies.

"I was thus buried in aimless, endless reveries when, from the spot

I had shortly before passed through, among the mint and heather, a voice, a roughish voice, made itself heard. Some one was calling me.

"'Master nephew! Master nephew!'

"I gave a jump and found myself face to face with Justin Lebasset threading his way among the bushes.

"'Quick, master nephew! the cherries are as fresh as you could wish them, and you can crunch them between your teeth like hail-stones.'

"His hand caught mine and I was soon clear of the willow stumps that got in the way of my feet. Lebasset had lifted me as though I were only a feather's-weight.

"'Quick!' he repeated, 'quick!'

"Had they disturbed your nap? Had you quietly woke up of your own accord? I cannot tell, my dear Arribas. What I do know is that, on rejoining you, I was not a little surprised to find you sitting by Barthélemy Jalaguier's side, with both your hands full of cherries. They had brought the table out of the interior of the cottage and, as the full force of the sun now found its way through the fig-trees, they had carried it to the other side of the building where the roof, with projecting eaves like all the roofs in the snowy district of the Espinouze, afforded a shade at once dark and transparent, like a bit of the night sky.

"'Fall to, and don't be ashamed, master nephew, fall to!' said Jalaguier, whom nothing escaped.

"I did not wait to be asked twice; following your example, my friend, I stripped the branches that lay extended before us.

"What cherries! When I think of them after all these years, I can still taste their refreshing sweetness. And their sweetness had nothing insipid in it, their freshness nothing sharp. The taste of the fruit made a delicious blend with the taste of the Cérisoles water, for this iced water, 'the melted snow,' as my uncle called it, had added something of its own to the branches that had been dipped in it. The stones were a trifle large, unfortunately; but what was there to wonder at in that, when the cherries had reached the size of little October apples? Besides, the stones, though of exceptional development, had in no way

altered the fine quality of the flesh, which remained firm and delicate, of mingled white and rose, sourish, yet with just the necessary amount of sugar for a perfect flavour.

"If Honorine and Justin had been discreet enough to rarely touch the branches, you, old Jalaguier, and I had returned again and again to the charge, and very few red spots were now to be seen among the foliage that lay strewn from one end to the other of the table, all crushed, stripped, and faded.

"'You know, master nephew, when the Rocaillet cherries are all gone, we have others still at Les Cérisoles,' said the young girl to me.

"And she pointed with her finger to a score of cherry-trees whose furrowed trunks, gleaming here and there with huge lumps of gum of a yellow amber colour, were ranged in a line through the whole length of the orchard as far as the brooklet.

"'Our trees being very little looked after,' she continued, 'their fruit is poor in size, but it has a good deal of flavour. Taste some, master nephew. And do you taste some, too, Arribassou.'

"A small branch broken off by a sharp tug was thrown on the table.

"'There now! You have frightened away the goldfinch,' said Justin.

"'The goldfinch?' she asked.

"'He was there, perched on that very branch, when you caught hold of it.'

"'If I had only known!——'

"'I had been watching him for a whole minute, pecking with his sharp beak at a ripe cherry, and I was saying within myself: 'I wonder if he will condescend, to-day that we are all so happy at Les Cérisoles, to treat us to a serenade.'

"'Then you are happy to-day, my lad?' asked the old man with a breathless eagerness that made his voice tremble.

"'I should think so! Jalaguier, this morning I had a great weight on my heart, a weight heavier than the whole Espinouze mountain; now that is all gone, I feel myself on wings.'

"'So Norine has spoken to you?'

"'Yes, Jalaguier, Norine has spoken to me.'

"'And what did she say, that Norine of ours?'

"'Norine told me she was willing to take me for her husband—— You can imagine, Jalaguier, how my heart is singing within me, and how I should like a goldfinch, a hundred finches, all the finches in Les Cérisoles, to be singing along with it!'

"He took a long look in the direction of the trees, then fell to whistling with a note at once soft and clear. He stopped—— waited—— began again. The note, at first muffled, became quicker and more sonorous. What a wonderful fellow, this Justin Lebasset! Standing up, with his red beard thrust forward and his forehead thrown back, his eyes fixed on the foliage of the cherry-trees, his hands on his hips, in a restful attitude at once easy and superb, he looked like some splendid young god haunting the country-side, as who should say Pan diverting himself at bird-charming. You should have seen with what looks of enthusiasm Honorine devoured him! She, too, was on her feet, and as her slim, straight, lissom form ever and anon bent in an impulse of irresistible fascination towards Justin, she drank in his notes with delight, and now and again, with parted lips, she mingled her own song with his. It seemed as though she were sighing out a prayer to the goldfinch in his hiding-place.

"There was a rustling of leaves in the sparse foliage of the fruit-trees, and all of a sudden several finches, their red heads thrust forward, their wings half-spread, hopped from branch to branch. It was just as though, among the clustering cherries, there were some that were flying.

"Justin lowered his voice, then stopped altogether. The birds, responding to his invitation, began their prelude.

XI

"Do you recollect, my friend, the betrothal of Louise Bassac, the only daughter of Churchwarden Bassac and the best match in the parish of Camplong? You and your father were at the ceremony in consideration of your being relatives of the young man, who was an Arribas, of Les Passettes. I don't know whether things have changed or not since

then; but, at that time, except old Lasserre and his stock, 'like the stars of the firmament in number,' every one at Les Passettes bore the name of Arribas. My uncle had just said grace and, before withdrawing—we had sat down to table at two and it was now striking five—he was preparing to bless the young people, who, with bent heads, were laughing in their sleeve and were altogether more frolicsome and frivolous than it seemed to me was proper, when a huge blackbird, the colour of ink, thrusting his long, pointed, brown-yellow beak through the branches of a medlar-tree, sent forth the shrillest of shrill pipes. Every nose was at once in the air, and my uncle, contemplating the bird with an ecstatic air, opened his mouth, then muttered a few broken words in which I found it impossible to discern any sense. May be, after the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, so expert in the language of every created being, especially in that of the birds, his reverence the Curé Fulcran enjoyed the exceptional privilege of making himself understood by the feathered songsters of the grove.

"Be that as it may, while my uncle was uttering unintelligible words and while I, contemplating his spare form, clad in his Sunday cassock, his two arms extended towards the medlar-tree, was half-inclined to fancy I saw round his bare head, a little above his tonsure, whiter than the sacred wafer, the golden nimbus of the Blessed, I felt a vague sense of misgiving, I know not what feeling of uneasiness. There was no getting out of it, I could augur no good for the forthcoming marriage from the presence of this big, black bird from Bataillo—of a certainty he must have come from the Bataillo Rock, the most desolate and sinister spot on the mountain-side. To be sure now and then he piped a few soft notes; but, more often than not, there issued from his beak, formed for the expression of irony rather than tenderness, prolonged, spun-out modulations, interrupted by mocking shrieks that spoiled all their seduction. Evidently this blackbird had flown all the way from Bataillo to the Bassac's court-yard on purpose to gibe at us. At the moment when my uncle, after a couple of solemn sentences full of emotion, spread out his hands towards the betrothed, neither of whom, I must say, was duly attentive, the ill-omened wearer of the mourning plumage gave forth a




MB. de Manuel.

harsh, strident, diabolical laugh. 'That means ill-luck for some one in the present company,' thought I. And I was not mistaken, for less than a year later, young Louise Arribas, *née* Bassac, left her husband in the lurch and went off no one knew whither—— All the Arribases in Les Passettes were in tears.

"How little like the insolent blackbird of Bataillo were the goldfinches of Les Cérisoles! How different was their behaviour at the betrothal of Honorine Jalaguier and Justin Lebasset!

"This betrothal under the cherry-trees was one unbroken harmony. Between the young birds, flocking together for the festivity, celebrating it with their songs, and the betrothed pair, in a mood of serious pondering, there was nothing discordant; on the contrary, there was, as it were, a secret understanding, a sort of close communion. It was as clear as daylight; the young folk, incapable of giving outward expression to the feeling at once terrible and delicious that well nigh stifled them, had called the finches to their aid, and the finches, in alternating trills, passing on the note from beak to beak, did wonders in the way of executing their commission. It was quite evident that in these soft flute-like melodies that echoed towards us from leaf to leaf, we were to recognize Honorine leaning towards Justin and telling him her troubles, and that the brighter notes, let off like rockets, were to be taken as signifying Justin bent over Honorine and pouring into her ear his vows of eternal fidelity. Moreover, neither one nor the other lost sight of the little creatures, encouraging them with a gesture, a word, a whistle scarce louder than a sigh, if the concert gave any sign of falling off. Oh! then, through the trees shot by the sun with bars of gold, among the quivering foliage, the trembling fruit, how briskly the melody would begin again! Once, two finches, with their magnificent wings outspread, came and perched themselves, singing all the while, on the edge of the table. Their little black eyes were fixed upon us for a second, then they flew off again towards the cherry-trees, which they passed through, going straight ahead without stopping.

"'It's all over, they are going away,' murmured Honorine following with a sad gaze the undulating, capricious flight of the birds.

"'They will come back to the wedding, my children,' said Barthélemy Jalaguier, in a joyous tone.

"'And when shall the wedding be?' asked the young fellow.

"'Next Michaelmas.'

"With a simultaneous movement, Honorine and Justin threw themselves on the old man, and each in turn embraced him, Justin first and violently, Honorine after him, more gently, but with eyes brimming over with tears.

"Under this double embrace, Jalaguier never budged; only his face, just before full of animation, grew pale. He had clung to his grandchild with both hands, and then had turned towards her, his face against hers, as though he could see her.

"Nevertheless the old man, shaken to the very depths of his soul, without strength or voice, remained seated. At intervals, he shook his head from right to left and from left to right.

"Suddenly, with a quick spring of the legs, he rose upright to his full height, like a poplar tree. His hands let fall his grandchild's and he gravely uttered these words :

"'Justin Lebasset, from to-day forward you become my son, and you can do your will with my house and belongings, which are henceforth your house and belongings.'

"After this huge effort, he fell back on his chair as though exhausted. A religious silence reigned all around us. I don't know how it was, but at that moment, at Les Cérisoles, you might have fancied yourself in church. You, my dear Arribas, less deeply moved than I was, took advantage of the circumstance; you took up our empty basket that lay under the table, made me a sign with your finger, and we slipped away for Truscas without a word of thanks.

"Ungrateful, ungrateful wretches that we were!

XII

"Here I close this letter, assuredly the very longest you have ever received, longer even than a letter of Saint Jérôme's to his brother Politian.

"And now what do you say of my little love history of Les Céri-

soles—history is the right word since I have invented nothing—and what says your housekeeper Mirette? Mirette, timorous, scrupulous devotee that she is, has blushed I dare say, in spite of her sixty years, more than once under her lace cap, when you read her Justin Lebasset's avowal to Honorine Jalaguier; for if I remember rightly, following in that matter the example of my uncle Fulcran, of blessed memory, you read everything to your housekeeper, even your correspondence with the Bishop. As for yourself, frank, deliberate, good-natured as you are, with no sympathy for those whose soul is disquieted instead of strengthened by religion, you have taken, I am sure, the whole affair by the right side, the plain side of human life, and, far from being scandalised, you have laughed.

"As far as that goes, in sending you these interminable pages, I have a hidden purpose of my own.

"Would you not be much surprised if I were to tell you that Honorine Jalaguier, wife of Justin Lebasset, who, about 1845, left Les Cérisoles, an appanage of your parish of Rocaillet, that Honorine Jalaguier, I say, is alive, that I have seen her now and then, that now and then I have spoken to her?

"Where? you will both of you exclaim, you and Mirette, for your cousin and housekeeper, Mirette Arribas, born at Les Passettes, made the acquaintance of Honorine the year she was with you for the chestnut-gathering, and may not have forgotten her.

"Where? Why, in Paris, to be sure! in Paris—— Have your perchance a relative, a friend who has deserted the Cévennes mountain-side and has never returned, a relative or friend you have given up for lost? Come to Paris, and you will find him there. In Paris you will always find the people you are looking for, and peradventure those you are not.

"I can hear Mirette, as curious as a magpie, begging me now to continue my letter, and I can hear you, as curious as a blackbird—that sarcastic blackbird of the Bassac's court-yard—equally anxious for me to proceed. I will proceed, and with the most minute detail, but not to-day.

"In order to interest you in Honorine Jalaguier, who will have need, sore need of your aid, my friend, I have been exerting myself to disinter

this buried recollection of our childhood, our vagabond, untrammelled, rural, pastoral childhood on the banks of the Espase, between the Jougla and the Bataillo Rock, between your farm at Les Passettes and our parsonage at Camplong. I mean to leave you a few days a prey to these recollections. If it is with you as it is with me, if, as years gradually pass over you, ever pointing the way more clearly towards the final forgetting, the last departure, the last separation from all things that are, your childhood takes a disproportionate place in your life, engrosses the half of your brain, you will have relished the idyll of Les Cérisoles in which we played our own small share along with those famous goldfinches, and you will not refuse to occupy yourself in succouring Honorine Jalaguier, wife of Justin Lebasset—— Oh! then too, I have a favour, a great favour to ask of you——

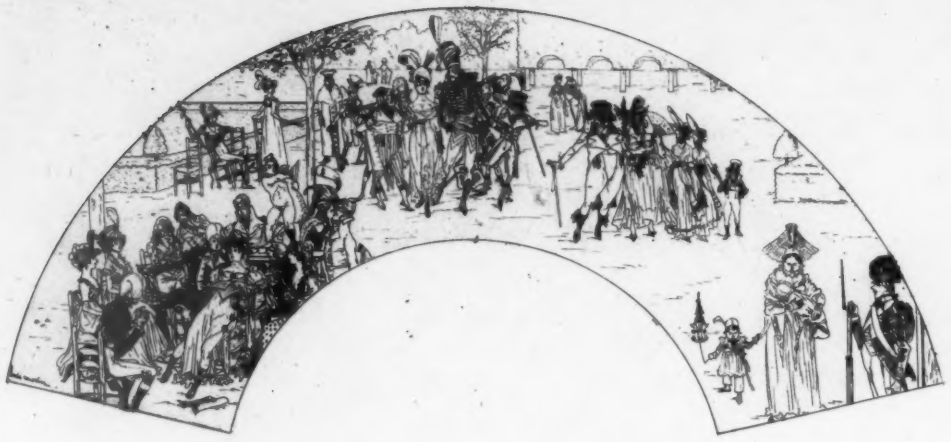
"Expect my second letter in a day or two.

"I embrace you, Arribassou, with the whole strength of my arms, with all my heart of 1842, when you were fifteen years old, and I was twelve, and we fared along the briar-strewn Truscas path that passes by Rocaillet."

FERDINAND FABRE.

(To be continued.)





HISTORY ON FANS(*)

1789-1804

We broke off our narrative at the taking of the old fortress in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The Bastille had been broken like an old fan, and in its overthrow had carried with it the Monarch and the Society of which it was an emblem. At its fall the world looked on in stupefaction, and none were more amazed at the effect of their audacity than the chief actors in the affair. The immense importance of the destruction of the Bastille was not at once understood, and the ringleaders for a while refrained from any open vaunting of their exploit. But in a few days the story of the storming was on every tongue, and the chief actors in the drama were hailed as heroes and demi-gods by the multitude. Endless were the prints, all repeating one motive with slight variations. They shewed the hapless De Launay dragged out in triumph by Arné of the Gardes-Françaises, and by his colleague, Humbert the watch-maker. The fans naturally caught at the idea, and reproduced it with additions and embellishments to suit the momentary taste. One, resplendent with ochres and blues, bears this inscription under the picture :

THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE BY THE CITIZENS OF PARIS
AND THE GARDES-FRANÇAISES, JULY 14, 1789.

(*) See *Art and Letters*, for January 1888, vol. I, p. 33.

On each side are verses set to the air—certainly more popular than appropriate!—of *Ma Tendre Musette*.

O ! jour immémorable *(sic)*,
Où nous devions périr,
Sans un trait admirable,
Fait pour nous secourir.
Des fastes de l'Histoire
Tu seras l'ornement,
France, chante victoire,
En cet heureux moment.

Clearly, the poets of the Revolution were yet unborn, for the other strophes are written in that special dialect which was to be used for Fualdès. The singer belauds Elie, one of the heroes of the day, and, in his ardour, threatens De Launay with "erasure from the Book of Life!" He ends with a curious bathos himself. After dwelling complacently on the exploits of the citizen-soldiers, after pointing to where the Bastille had once stood and to Royalty overturned, the last verse winds up with this queer couplet :

France, reprends courage
Sous Necker et Louis !

Necker is now the saviour, the palladium ! His smug, smiling face beams from every shop window; everything is covered with busts of the minister, or with verses extolling his talents and virtues. To the fans he was a godsend. On some he shines gloriously in a halo of golden spangles; on others he lords it at a royal audience, while a peasant clamours for equality of taxation, a bishop and a noble abjure their ancient privileges, and the poor harassed king trembling on his insecure throne exclaims : "I *will* do what is right!"

La France par Brienne au bord de son tombeau
Conduite, par Necker renaîtra de nouveau.

Necker a de Pallas la sagesse et l'égide
Et le juste Louis a Minerve pour guide.

But it was not long before Minerva withdrew from the scene, leaving her luckless *protégés* to shift for themselves in the gathering storm. The star of a new popular idol arose, and all France hung breathlessly upon Mirabeau's fiery oratory. The rugged ugliness of his face, seamed and

scarred like a lunar landscape, lent itself readily to the rude draughtsmanship of the fan designers; he appears declaiming in the tribune, haranguing the mob, confronting Dreux-Brézé, and then, suddenly, the busy actor figures for the last time on the stage, in the hushed silence of his funeral progress, and the fans set to work upon his epitaph. One design was his portrait with the proud motto : "In me the factions of all parties will find a foe" *(Je combattrai les factieux de tous les partis),* surrounded by a number of little medallions, or *cameos* as they were called, recording the chief incidents in his career. But in those times of violent upheaval, the friends of one day were the foes of the next, and Mirabeau's influence soon passed away. Who cared for his doctrines in 1792, when no partisan of king or queen, prince or noble, was tolerated for a moment? The former refrain :

Vivent la nation,
La Liberté, *le Roi,* la Constitution,

had been corrected to : "*La Loi,* la Constitution," and the fan-makers, mindful of their duties as good citizens, and with an eye to a brisk sale of their wares, printed the expurgated edition on the reverse of their screens. Not that their condition was much improved by their patriotism! Many among them were employed by the State to till the ground at the modest rate of twenty *sols* a day, and these days meant eight hours of hard work! Such among them as had helped to take the Bastille, began to regret the good old times, when reigning beauties had at least given them and their trade a helping hand, and when they could not turn out their frail goods fast enough to supply the demand. They found, too, that under the rule of liberty, their freedom of speech had come to an end with their other privileges. The fans, like every one else, had either to be good citizens or nothing. Their existence depended upon the zeal with which they declared for Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality, for the *Sans-Culottes* and the *Carmagnole.*

By the time the king mounted the scaffold on the 21st of January, 1793, not a fan would have dared to reproduce the features of the hated tyrant, and it was not until people breathed more freely under the milder sway of the Directory, that furtive signs of royalist leanings began to manifest

themselves. In those days of reaction, and of budding plots, fans were sold secretly, which made a tentative appeal by means of pictures of the king taking leave of his family, Marie-Antoinette in the Conciergerie, or tombs shaded by weeping willows, amongst the foliage of which might be traced the profiles of the royal victims.

Traders under the Republic had to confine themselves to the politics of the winning side. The victory of the "Mountain" over the Girondists was recorded in a patriotic allegory which was in great request for a time with fair *citoyennes* of the right persuasion. In a gloomy landscape, all thunderbolts and lightning flashes, a huge rock parts asunder, to bring forth the famous Tables of the Revolutionary Law. This work of art is described as "The Mountain giving Birth to the Republican Constitution." In the foreground is a group of exultant *Sans-Culottes,* putting to flight their opponents of the Gironde and the Marais, and the whole is summed up in four couplets set to the air of *La Croisée :*

Pour conquérir la Liberté
Chacun signala son courage,
Mais conservant la royauté
C'était rester dans l'esclavage.
Une autre révolution
Nous fit, en dépit de l'Espagne,
Sortir la Constitution
Du sein de la Montagne.

With their usual amenity the victors go on to speak of their adversaries as "vile toads." This fan was a great favourite with the ladies. They unfurled it at every merry-making, and displayed it with the calm impassibility of enlightened womanhood. Did not another popular design shew these gentle creatures urging on the soldiers, weary at last of carnage, in such mild strains as these : "Vile and infamous wretches! Have you forgotten the women of Lacedemonia, of Sparta, and of Beauvais? Think you that the women of the French Republic care less for Liberty? You shall be taught to know us better! And if our men are traitors, if they fly or if they perish, we ourselves will make you dance the *Carmagnole* to the roar of cannon!" The speakers deliver their addresses from the scarp of a rampart, and emphasize them by the gesture for which a certain

illustrious statesman has since been so severely taken to task—shewing that there is indeed nothing new under the sun!

One day a young girl with a high hat and a "constitutional" fan in her hand, asked leave to speak in private to Citizen Marat. This girl was Charlotte Corday, and she stabbed the "Friend of the People" in his bath. Charlotte's fan was mentioned in the deposition of Laurent Bas, who was working in the house at the time. The trade, fearing that the incident might cast discredit on their goods, hastened to throw a sop to the populace by bringing out fans "à la Marat," which at once became the rage. On some the sole design was the pale, unhealthy head of the tribune; while on others he was surrounded with a company of heroes who had fallen in the cause of Liberty. The longest lived of these seems to have been one with four medallion busts, representing Marat, Lepelletier, Challier, and the youthful Barra. By an eccentricity of spelling common enough in those times, the inscription below changed Challier (the Marat of Lyons) into *Charlier,* and Barra into *Barras*. The legend on the border ran thus :

Amoureux de la Liberté
Ils ont tous quatres *(sic)* versé leur sang pour la patrie
De tous quatres à bon droit la mémoire est chérie
Et tous quatres voleront à l'immortalité.

It was printed on yellow paper with a border of pikes and caps of Liberty, and was bought by Jacobin customers at 48 *livres* a gross. A sample may be seen in the National Library in Paris, where, strange to say, it is pasted into an album bearing the arms of Marie-Antoinette, which is believed to have been arranged by the queen herself.

On another Marat fan the hero and Lepelletier were placed on either side of a statue of Liberty and a stanza full of superfluous expletives :

Marat, Marat n'est plus, ainsi que Saint-Fargeau!

These fans were a feature in a sort of spectacle which was given about this time in front of the Opera House. The façade was transformed into a "Temple of the Liberal Arts," and a troop of little urchins, armed with these queer tributes to martyrdom, marched down the steps, singing patriotic verses in honour of the dead hero. Those were the days, too,

when David, in presenting a sketch of Marat's death to the Convention, made his famous tirade : "Humanity, say to those who call him a drinker of blood, that Marat, your favourite child, never caused a single tear to flow!" Which a cynic explained to mean that the tribune had guillotined all who might have wept!

But it was not in the nature of such an apotheosis to last, and we can pass on to a certain evening when, at one of the theatres, the "favourite child of Humanity" was rolled in the mud and hanged in effigy. All the fans, bonbon boxes and labels on which his head had once figured, crowned with stars, bound about with laurels, or surrounded by a martyr's halo, were torn, burnt, and cast away. Lepelletier shared his fall as he had shared his altar, and a sacrifice of former idols began, as pitiless in its way as the "Friend of the People" himself. By the eternal law of reaction the ancient tyrant and the martyr of Liberty were included in a common anathema. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

The fan-makers deprived of a fruitful source of inspiration at home, tried for a time what they could do in the colonial market.

In 1791 Grégoire and Robespierre had passed an act, by which coloured persons, born of free parents, were placed on an equality with the whites. The question cropped up again in the debate of the 4th of February, 1794, on the abolition of the slave trade. The printsellers saw an opening in this discussion and they set to work. On one of the fans of the day, the colonies, in the person of a young woman dressed after the fashion of Marmontel's Incas, exclaims in English to the French Republic : "Charming hope of Liberty, come and comfort my agitated heart." The figure of France, in a Phrygian cap, leans upon a shield, and receives this impassioned invitation calmly enough. Behind her, Mercury, the god of Commerce, shakes a handful of broken chains, and on the right stands America, a negress, with this inscription on her breast : "Independence, and trade all over the globe." This rudely engraved sheet of paper, was one of the signs of the times, and shewed which way the current set. The national frenzy was dying out; the ninth of Thermidor was not far off, and senators and politicians were sobering down. People began to see that the loudest talkers were not always the best


RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ.
CAISSE PATRIOTIQUE
Assignat
Série
Numéro

pay-masters, and the ruined merchants took heart of grace. After the death of Robespierre, a popular lampoon appeared, the letters of which were formed of grotesque figurines; the guillotine appeared in the centre.

Roberst Pierre ist nuntod
Schöneck den frieden uns
O Gott!
Dieses winscht die ganhe welt
Weil die handlung eingestelt.

"Robespierre is dead at last. Grant us peace, O God! All the nations of the Earth desire it, for commerce is overthrown."

The close of the Convention heralded the triumph of Rousseau, "the lover of Nature." Already, at the Théâtre Feydeau, the younger enthusiasts had substituted his bust for that of Marat, which they had thrown out into the kennel. "Down with Marat!" they cried; "Down with the bloody monster who demanded three hundred thousand heads!" And presently this was changed to: "Long live the author of *Émile, Le Contrat Social, La Nouvelle Héloïse!*" In the days of the Revolution, one nail soon drove out another. Mirabeau had taken Necker's place in the Panthéon, and Marat, Mirabeau's: and so Rousseau, so lately a type of moderation, usurped, in his turn, the throne of the Jacobin idol. The moment had come when the fan-makers might allow the *sans-culottes* to go by the board. They began by an allegory, in which Jean-Jacques was set on a car, embracing a statue of pregnant Nature, with his right hand full of field-flowers. In the background appeared the tomb of Ermenonville, embowered in poplars, and in the front a crowd of young mothers, holding up their children to catch a glimpse of the hero. It has been said that Madame Tallien possessed one of these gems, which she paraded as a good "Thermidorienne" should, but the truth seems to be that her heir, Doctor Cabarrus, had one in his possession. It was reproduced by M. Spire Blondel, who thought it merely an agricultural allegory.

The Terror was really at an end. On the fourth of Brumaire, in the year IV (October 26th, 1795), at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the President of the Convention announced that the mission of the Assembly was accomplished, and the session finished. Hundreds of voices hailed these last

words with cries of "Long life to the Republic!" The last fan brought out under the Convention, celebrated the downfall of the Vendéen hopes, and the triumph of the Nation. It shewed François Barthélemy, ambassador of the French Republic, standing on the steps of an altar, with Don Domingo Yriarte, plenipotentiary of Spain, signing the Treaty of Basle. A Bourbon had recognized the Republic! And on the very same day, La Vendée had been finally crushed at Quiberon. (July 12th, 1795.) The Directory, the Regency of the Republic, was about to take the reins.

* * *

When the imprisoned actors were set at liberty, and the theatres re-opened, the love of pleasure and amusement, so long repressed by the insecurity of the Terror, broke bounds altogether, and for a time, the storm of reaction threatened to carry away every stone of the revolutionary fabric. Once more fashion held absolute sway, and manners ran to a ludicrous extreme of unreality and affectation. The *Tiers État* were determined that the blood lately shed should not be mere waste, and even the most strait-laced began to wish for a revival of the old graces and elegances of life—not among the class who had formerly displayed them by hereditary right, but among themselves. David, the high-priest of Republican Art, was no longer the person of importance he had once been, but his Græco-Romanism was still in high favour, and ladies began to dress and pose as Cornelias, Lucretias, and the rest. The ancients reigned supreme over furniture, over dress, even over architecture; and, in the height of the new cult, echoes from the old *régime* began to make themselves heard. The excesses of tyranny were now remembered without any particular bitterness, or special sense of shame; and Society turned into the old paths with all the levity of folks eager to enjoy. The Republican fan-makers laid aside their spades and hoes; three hundred of them returned to their former trade, and set to work upon the novelties of the day. Roman myths, like those on the Pompeian walls, made their appearance on the folded sheets, sleeping Cupids, worshippers of Diana, Hymencea, Apollo Citharœdos, etched or engraved in medallions with a certain amount of delicacy, and refinement and then illuminated. Scenes followed from the Parthenon frieze and

were varied by Spanish dances, bull-fights, fandangos, blunderbuss-bearing brigands; for since the Treaty of Basle the Spaniards had been in great favour with their neighbours on our side of the Pyrenees. Their only competitors were the Chinese and the Indians of Marmontel, but even these were forced to yield to the French law of costume, which would allow nothing but clinging gowns and the short, close-curled locks of the *coiffure à la Titus*. The next fashion in fans was to paint them with figures in high tones, relieved against a background of some dark tint, like a white relief upon black marble. The edges were ornamented with friezes of stag hunts, or flights of chubby Cupids. Others were printed with relief blocks in wood, and covered with flowers and ornaments, *en camaïeu*, like china. In the midst of the garlands some workman more skilful, or more daring than his fellows, would introduce a pastoral scene after Boucher or Watteau. By such ventures as these the trade tested the ice before striking out boldly towards reaction.

Thus in a thousand almost imperceptible ways, attacks were made upon the Revolution. First among the pin-pricks with which the warfare opened was the sale by Madame Despeaux, of the screens we have already mentioned, the weeping willows, with the royal profiles among the foliage. These fetched as much as two hundred *livres* apiece. Then came puzzle-pictures made up of *assignats*, thrown with careful carelessness one upon another, and in the midst, the late king's stamp and effigy. These escaped prosecution, for as the royal features appeared on those much abused documents, with their forced circulation, it was difficult to call the caricaturists bad citizens for reproducing them. The fair aristocrats of the Palais-Égalité, delighted in fluttering these fans under the noses of the police, with defiant glances. Royalism became "good form," and all the gilded youth of the day were royalist. Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette reigned once more on snuff-boxes, pins, and buttons. It was the fashion for young men to carry a little aristocratic mace as a cane; they wore rings with the motto: "God save the King," in French, Latin, and English. They pervaded theatres and concert-rooms, hissing the *Marseillaise*, laughing at the Convention, and baiting the *Jacoquins*. They had formerly dressed their hair *à la contre-révolution*, with wavy

locks, and a "club"; they now took to black tippets, and a sort of negro jargon in their speech, and burlesqued the old war-cry : *Vivre libre ou mourir,* by *Ventre libre ou la mort!* The *fleur-de-lis* waved once more in the van of battle, and its partisans retorted upon Duhem, and the Septembrists for their denunciations of the emblem with such couplets as these :

> Vous qui haïssez tant la fleur de lis, mes drôles,
> Faites donc retourner le cuir de vos épaules."

A savage allusion to the branding of galley-slaves.

A fan much patronized by the *aimables* of the "little Coblentz," as they called the Boulevard des Italiens, from its being a favourite resort of *émigrés* conspirators, was the "magic lantern fan," on which a crowd of *Incroyables* are grouped round a child, who is placing the slides in a magic lantern. A patch of light thrown on a wall made a round white spot, which at first sight seemed perfectly blank. But on holding it up before a candle, the king, queen, and dauphin appeared, like the heads of Mercury on French bank-notes.

The Royalists were not content with these party challenges. They began to criticise the government finance. Creditors of the State were at that time receiving their *assignats* at par, which, when realized, were only worth one-tenth of their nominal value. Thus, 10,000 *livres* in paper money was worth scarcely 1,000 livres. This state of things gave rise to a clever skit, representing an old fish-wife giving alms to a poor *rentier*. Many kindred prints depicted these unfortunate proprietors, thin, ragged, and wretched, on their way to Bicêtre, holding their scrip in their hands, and accepting the charity of their former servants. The malcontent section, led by the fan-makers, found in this theme a splendid weapon, wherewith to harass their opponents. All sorts of fancy goods were ornamented with a composition, to which the name *Grammaire française à l'usage des Rentiers* (French grammar for the use of the national creditors) was given. It consisted of two contrasting figures, the Dives of the past, and the rich man of the present; the one round, sleek, and jolly, with substantial clothing, and bursting pockets; the other pale, shabby, and crippled, trouserless and with rents in his vest. "I was,

thou wast, he was..." murmurs the unhappy financier over his *assignats*. Below was a long list of the *voluntary* patriotic gifts made by him to the Nation, under the reign of the Jacobins. He had done nothing but pay : For the patriotic fund—for the *corps de garde*—for saltpetre—for lint —for trousers for the brave *sans-culottes*—for shoes and stockings for the same—for the volunteers against la Vendée—for the widows and orphans —for the voluntary loan—for Marat's fête—for Barra and Viala's fête—for civic feasts—for *l'imposition sompt*^{er} (sic)—for *l'imposition Merc*^{er}—*l'imposition Fer*^{er}—for the forced loan—for the patents of the year IV and the year V—for the war-tax—and so on—till, from presenting trousers to the brave *sans-culottes,* the *rentier* had come to have none of his own.

Subjects such as these, though neither artistic nor refined, had a tremendous vogue with the Opposition, and kept the fires of party hatred in a blaze. Swindling speculators, shameless rascals, who raise rogues like themselves to the topmost pinnacle of fortune, and leave the capitalists of former days to starve, were gibbeted on many contemporary fans.

Jean qui pleure is the holder of paper money; he points to the piles of *assignats* scattered round him, and exclaims dolefully :

Vous êtes étonnés, je m'en aperçois bien,
Qu'avec tant de papier je ne possède rien.

Jean qui rit, on the other hand, is the lucky speculator, the rascally valet, enriched by the sale of gold. On one of such fans, preserved in the National Library, some forgotten hand has written this rebus :

Venance	France	Fer	Rop
G	D	K	Paris.

which should be read :

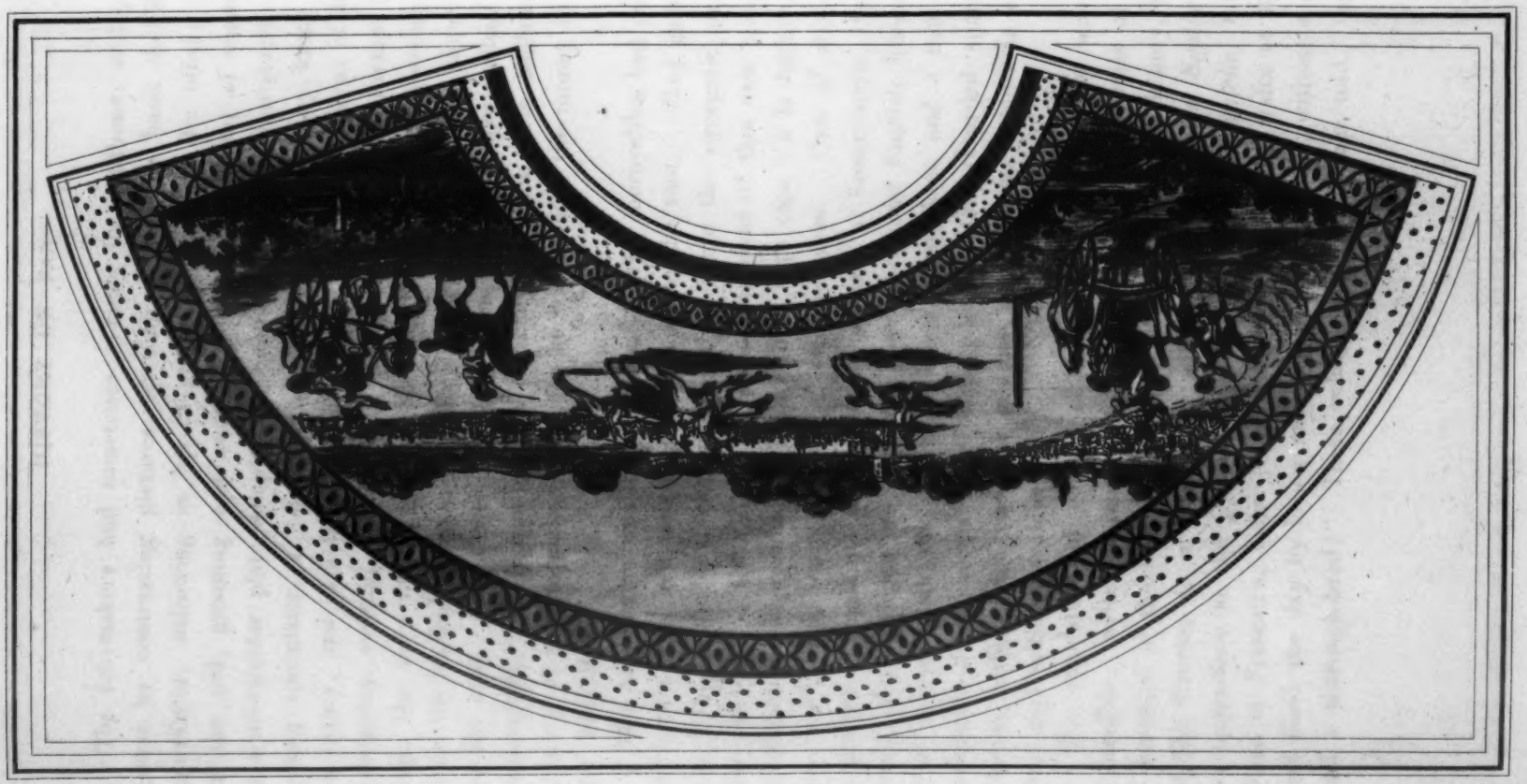
J'ai souvenance
Des souffrances
Qu'a souffert *(sic)*
Paris sous Rop (espierre).

The favourite meeting-place of the gamblers in those days was the portico in the Rue Vivienne, hence called the "Arab quarter." It was the focus for the whole horde of thieves, swindlers and cut-purses, who, under the guise of *agents de change,* preyed upon the credulity of some,

and the cupidity of others. All sorts of traffic and barter went on, but the principal dealings were in goods that never came to light, and which were bought and sold a hundred times over, without ever changing hands. The most insane prices were given for specie; in May, 1796, one *louis d'or* was worth 10,000 *livres,* in *assignats*. The *Observateur* speaks of one Dupuis, who had realized a fabulous fortune by the sale of bags of bullion, each containing twelve *livres* in silver. All the lackeys of the old *régime,* all the bankrupts of the new, every kind and every degree of swindler and charlatan, hastened to swell the throng at the *Perron*. The Café de Chartres was the principal house of call for all these traders in cash.

In the country districts, the pressure of dearth and misery from successive bad harvests, began to be felt. The luxury affected by these men was beyond description. They lolled in the doorways of the best restaurants : their costly English horses, held by microscopic tigers, pawing the ground the while. Dressed up in extraordinary costumes, loaded with absurd ornaments, they might well be called the *Incroyables,* the Incredibles! It was the Regency over again. Nothing was wanting to complete the analogy, not even the hunchback of the Rue Quincampoix. Thieves and mountebanks set the fashion, and gave the tone to Society. Their women were, if possible, more outrageous than themselves. They wore enormous peaks to their hats, and pillow-case skirts, the tails of which were carried over the arm, defining every contour of the legs and hips.

The fans engraved by Tresca, after C. Vernet, are covered with these fantastic figures, groups of "Heroines of the Day," "Follies of the Day," "Incroyables of the Café, waiting on the movements of the Bourse," "Croyables on the Perron." The motley saraband recalls those "Dances of Death," with which our forefathers loved to border their prayers. One of the most telling designs was a meeting between a former master and his servant. The valet peers at his master through an eye-glass; the latter has stopped short in amazement. Each utters an exclamation : "My scoundrel of a man!" says the master. "Ah! here *he* is again. I thought he had emigrated," says the man. A little point is added by giving the servant the aristocratic "mace" in his hand, while the master looks more like a groom than anything else.



The fan-makers had sometimes a fancy for antithesis, and pointed a moral by contrasting pictures, shewing on the one hand the shameless speculator, wallowing in his ill-gotten wealth; on the other, the tiller of the soil, groaning and sweating for the enrichment of rogues. On a semi-circular plate, adapted for mounting, Landelle introduced a typical young speculator, a "payer in *assignats,*" surrounded by every attribute of luxury, and in a frieze running round the design, groups of labourers, ploughing, sowing, and reaping. He, the swindler, was exempt from this toil; the only drainage that concerned him, was the diverting of gold from its lawful channels; the only cut he troubled himself about was that of his coat. Those were the days when a young officer, called Napoleon Buonaparte, was intriguing with a lackey to obtain from Madame Tallien a scrap of stuff to make a coat, for he was without the money to buy one for himself.

The Anglomania was the next craze. The Incroyables had race horses with slim legs, and tails cropped almost to the root. They gallop across the fans of the day, choosing for their share the cynegetic passions of the old days. Carle Vernet became the David of this new sport. Fair huntresses, masquerading in tight habits, with caps "à la Jockey," carried fans on which were pictures of steeple-chases. One of these prints, engraved in aquatint, shews the Hippodrome at Longchamps, the starting posts, the carriages crowded with spectators, and English horses racing. The course which the victor had covered in three and a half minutes, measured 2,577 mètres, thus beating the greatest recorded speed of the Roman barbs, which was four minutes for the same distance in a straight line, and without a rider.

The spectators, of course, all became horsey. "How would it be "possible," writes Mercier, "to get through all the business of the day —breakfast at the Café Hardy, assist at the toilette of a beauty, speculate at the Bourse, do a little stock gambling at the *Jardin Égalité*, put in an appearance at the Opéra-Comique, run through *Bagatelle,* take one's place at Frascati's, make jokes at Aspasia's tea-table, waltz at Ranelagh, and finish the day by losing money in a gaming-house, without a cabriolet and a thorough-bred?" These vehicles, we are further told, "are made

lighter every day, to give increased speed in the race for wealth; the skill of the wheelwright is called in to second the fretful cupidity of the gambler. The spokes are reduced to the thickness of matches. There are now three principal things to admire in a fashionable "cab"—the silver body, the wheels, and the horse. The whole thing, including the owner and his groom, ought not to weigh more than a good-sized portmanteau."

In the midst of all this moral degradation, a dawning glory dazzled the most cynical. The poor and obscure little hero we have glanced at before made all Europe ring with the story of victories "worthy of Leonidas." The great events of the Soldier's career had its trivial, as well as its gigantic fruits. Whilst Buonaparte was leading his victorious armies through Italy, the Fan of the People, the historic fan, had such a circulation as had never been know in its most palmy days. In 1796, out of two hundred engravings deposited in the National Library, one hundred and fourteen were designs for fans, and these are nearly all in honour of the genius which made the Republic respected in spite of its errors and excesses.

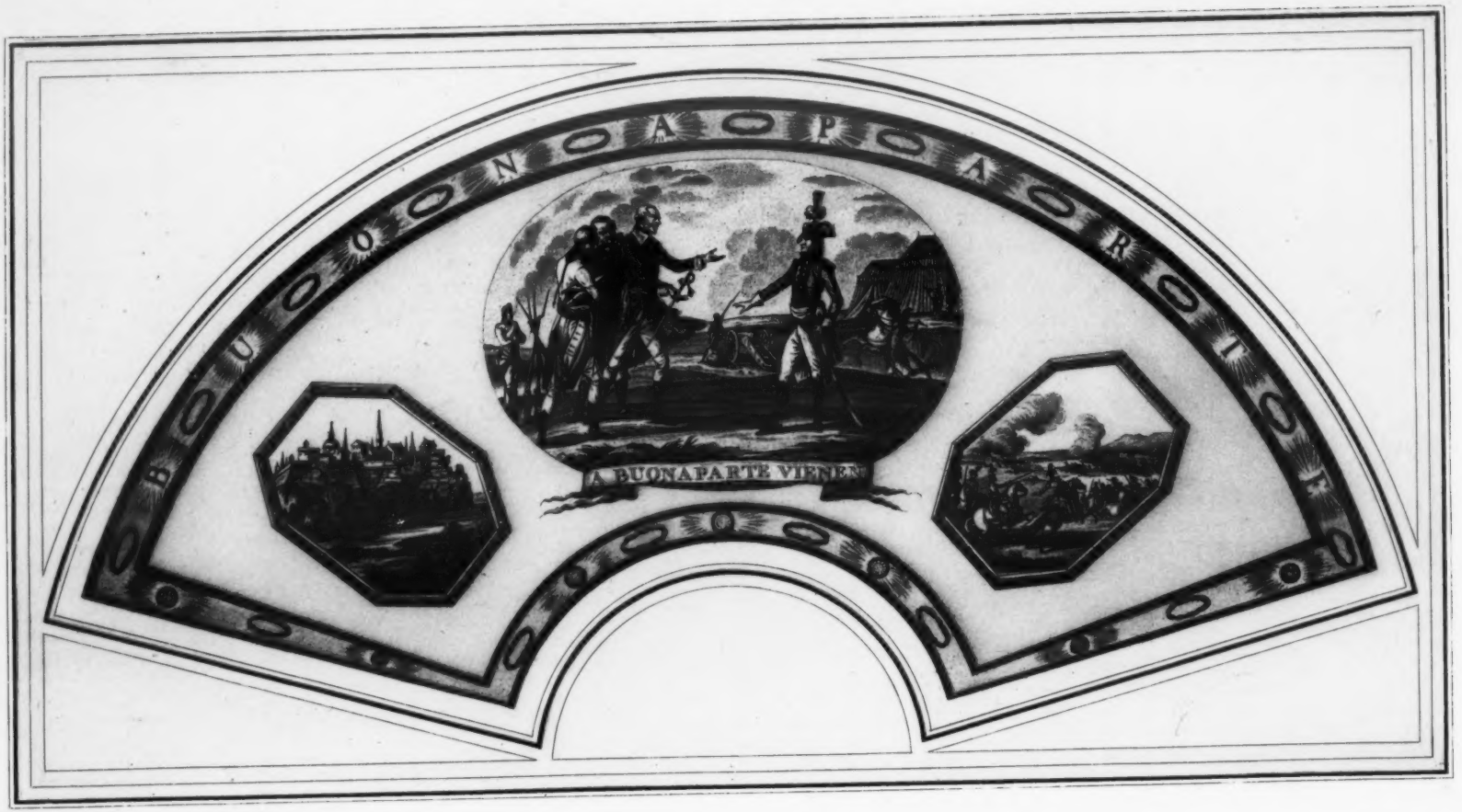
One shews his pale, worn face in a coloured medallion, flanked by Fame and Victory, and encircled with martial trophies, the device is *Vencer u morir*. Another, the best of the series, well engraved by Bertaux, and tastefully coloured, represents Wurmser, giving up his sword to the General in Chief. The Treaty of Campo-Formio raised the general enthusiasm to the highest pitch.

Everybody, aristocrat and Jacobin alike, bought "The Glorious Peace of the Year VI," a very indifferent trifle, on which Bonneville presents a big-nosed Napoleon, holding a war-map in his hand, to the hero's admirers. The central group was surrounded by allegorical figures, with the inscription:

NOUVELLES RÉPUBLIQUES
RÈGNE DES ARTS
ALLIANCE DE TOUS LES FRANÇAIS

The "Reign of Art," staggers one a little, but who would dream of disputing the question?

The national pride grew from hour to hour. Another design shews the Directory in the presence of all the monarchs of Europe, who hold


BUONAPARTE
A BUONAPARTE VIENE

olive branches in their hands. Spain, Austria, Russia, Sardinia, Holland, even England herself, are suing for peace.

Skilled artists, such as Chaudet, Jean Godefroy the engraver, and Percier and Fontaine the architects, set about the composition of a Roman fan in honour of the successful soldier. In the centre, on a polygonal space, Buonaparte's face stands out like a cameo; Peace and Victory crown him. The architectural ornaments contributed by Percier and Fontaine are Greek and Roman in style, and give rather a heavy effect to the composition. But such as it is, this curious page of French history gives, in spite of its trivial mission, a perfect reflex of the life of the Directory.

Buonaparte's return to France gave a fresh impetus to the trade. He was everywhere received with ovations, and presently fans were for sale, showing the entry of the hero, led by Victory and the French Republic. The latter stands near a bee-hive. Hercules is in the background. The bordering frieze is composed of the letters of Buonaparte's name, separated by ornaments.

Next came "The Reception of General Buonaparte, who announces the Emperor's Treaty of 1797 to the Directory;" a curiously naive composition, in which the various members of the Government, huddled upon a throne, await the advent of the hero in the inner court of the Luxembourg. He advances, led by Talleyrand, the minister for Foreign Affairs; his personality is simple enough; *he* has not covered himself with plumes. Barras harangues him, and overwhelms him with compliments. Presently he will preside at the banquet in the *Salle d'audience*.

At the very moment when the General was proceeding to this ceremony, on the 10th of December, 1797, the planet Venus appeared in the sky at mid-day. This was the famous "star." The very ordinary phenomenon excited the people beyond measure; they declared it to be a comet. Another opening for the fan-makers! They brought out one representing a crowd of frightened folks, surrounding an astrologer, who is adjusting his telescope. Thereupon all the *Agréables* dress themselves and their hair *à la comète, à l'étoile,* and shower stars in all directions. Nothing escapes this invasion of the heavenly bodies.

And all this time the General, shut up in his modest house of the Rue Chantereine, was playing at simplicity. The whole Republic was at his feet; the official world greeted him as a saviour. And we may say with Thiers : "Let us not too vehemently accuse our fathers of weakness. The far off vision of that glory, reaching us through the mists of time and misfortune, thrills us. Let us ask ourselves with Æschylus : 'How had it been, if *we* had beheld the monster face to face?'"

The industry we have been tracing reaches its greatest production at this period of the Directory. We may class, among the fans we have been describing, some designed in honour of the Italian Republics, notably one in honour of the proclamation of Ligurian independence at Genoa.

It was a characteristic Italian trait in this revolution that the people should have been chiefly incited to rebellion by a monk, who was loud in his insistance on the part played by the Gospel in the deliverance of Nations. Urged on by him, the insurgents burnt the "Golden Book" of the nobility, and this scene is reproduced on the fans. The Ligurians, crowned with caps of Liberty, are dancing the *Carmagnole* round the *auto-da-fé*.

The vogue of fans was once more universal, and few women disregarded the custom. The time of mirth and roses had come again, and everywhere garlands and Cupids, and rustic idylls were creeping in amongst the Greeks and Romans. The nations of the Earth kissed each other, happy shepherds, children at play, were all repeated again and again in the designs. Scarcely was the earthquake over, than the people set to work, feasting and merry-making. It was like the rural fêtes of the ancient Trojans, during the intervals of hostilities.

"The Desire of the Nations," is the title of a drawing in which a group of princes clasp hands, while in the background, their subjects are dancing merrily. About this time, Milon composed his poem on the fan, a sort of burlesque *Henriade* of many cantos :

Je chante l'éventail, arme utile et légère,
Qui, servant de parure au sexe qui sait plaire,
Captive en sa faveur, au gré de ses désirs,
Le souffle caressant des amoureux zéphirs.

Zémis sighs for the lovely Delphine, who is deaf to his prayers. He flies to the woods, and invokes Venus. The goddess orders Love to prepare a fan, and his people set to work :

L'un plisse le papier, l'autre en rayons égaux
Polit d'un bois léger les fragiles morceaux.

When the work is finished, Zémis receives it from the hands of the goddess, and his happiness is secured.

To deserve a poem, a thing must have achieved considerable popularity. "Modern Phrynes" gave the fan an important place in their toilette.

"*Le Tableau général du goût*" descants on the giddy and capricious manias of womankind. "The bland jeweller dazzles Phryne's bright eyes by the display of a thousand costly trifles in the newest style. A fan of black crape, mounted on white mother-of-pearl, and ornamented with figures copied more or less successfully from antique models, catches her fancy. The flesh of these semi-nude figures is rendered by scraps of painted satin, cut out and stuck upon the dark background. The drapery is formed of golden spangles overlapping each other, a peculiarly tasteless and heavy device. Alcindor is delighted with the fan, subject, design and workmanship; to-morrow he will pronounce it perfectly hideous. And why not? To-morrow other Parisian beauties will have got hold of similar fans, and the charm of novelty will have vanished."

One of the designs published by Bonneville places the fan in a new light as a moral engine. A young maiden defends herself from the shafts of Cupid by means of her fan, and is encouraged in these gallant strains :

Beautés, quand, avec l'éventail,
Vous ombragez votre figure,
Vous nous privez du beau détail
Et des trésors de la nature ;

Chacun maudit cet instrument
Qui s'oppose à le satisfaire,
Car le plaisir, en vous voyant,
Conduit au désir de vous plaire.

and so on to the end, which runs :

Je me borne donc à vous dire
Que l'éventail est en ce jour,
Pour une belle qui soupire,
Le télégraphe de l'amour.

The author has placed in little *cartouches* classic verses to warn ladies against giving way to the temptations of their hearts. They are told to distrust young dandies; that fine clothes are nothing but a vain show :

On voit à Paris de petits commis
Mis
Comme des princes,
Qui souvent sont venus
Nuds
De leurs provinces.

The antique craze seems now to have had its day; the laxity of manners under the Directory is faithfully reflected in its fans. Baron floods the market with gallant little episodes, the sale of which increases steadily from year to year.

Serious subjects were brought into fashion again by the Peace of the year X. Some were specially designed for the Spanish market. "Paz de todas las potencias por la Republica Francesa." In the middle the Republic crowned with laurels, seated before a pile of arms and flags of all nationalities. On the left is Love, on the right Mercury, below Mars and Neptune. On the reverse is the principal scene : Buonaparte, as First Consul, crowned by France, with allegoric groups symbolizing agricultural and commercial rejoicings. The same *data* are constantly reappearing in all works of the day. Sometimes it is a medallion lost amongst clouds and bearing the legend : "The barometer is set fair;" sometimes a band of nymphs dancing before the "Hôtel de la Concorde," enticing the people to join their gay *ballet.* Fallen tyrants no longer inspire any horror; portraits of them abound; the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias with the daughter of the King of Naples is celebrated; the Republicans have a craze for all that is past and gone, the very marrow of their bones is saturated with the spirit of a sort of aristocratic



renascence. *O homines ad servitutem nati!* cried the Irreconcilables.

The fans exported to Spain endeavoured to reassure the Peninsula touching the policy of the First Consul. They set forth the reception of the General by Cardinal Caprara, the review in the Place du Carrousel, the royal marriages at Barcelona, and the entry of the Court of Madrid into the town. A few satiric sheets play upon the reforming tendency in the French Government; the administrators of Justice are placed in opposition with the soldiers and the peasant. "I feed you all," says the agriculturist; "I guard you all," declares the soldier; "And I ruin you all," confesses the lawyer. It is the business of the First Consul to put every one into his right place, to improve abuses from off the face of the earth.

History and the Drama were not neglected. A favourite subject was Fanchon, the hurdy-gurdy player, seated between two characters from some comedy, and accompanied by a player on the triangle. Or Madame de La Vallière, dressed as an Incroyable, bidding farewell to Maria Theresa, in the presence of Louis XIV. "Oh!" cries the Duchess, "I feel from this moment that I have made my peace with Virtue!" Or Bayard bringing back a young girl to her mother. Antiquity still contributed its Orpheuses, its Clelias, its Hectors, its Cæsars, its ogling and leering Cleopatras, painted and gilded, inoffensive subjects which could not give offence to the master.

But now a thunder-clap disturbed the serenity of the blue. In the May of 1803, the Peace of Amiens was broken by the English, and Buonaparte at once set to work to form the famous camp at Boulogne. What a chance for the fan! Loaded with ships, with great guns, with soldiers, and with balloons, it helped to coin popularity for a fanciful adventure, for an expedition fantastic in conception and full of strange possibilities. Baron abandons his riskiness, his scenes of Gallic love-making, for politics. He presents to the curious a scene in which the First Consul, prancing on the clouds like Raffet's Napoleon, reaches England on horseback and watches his troops arrive in parachutes, in ships, and by a subterranean passage! So that the Channel tunnel is not an idea of yesterday. It was half seriously foreseen by the fan-makers

more than eighty years ago, just as we shall presently find them giving the first hint of the Panama Canal.

In all this we find ourselves in an atmosphere which is almost apocalyptic. The Frenchmen of the Consulate pervade the air and the sea. The *Publiciste* for the 13th of Prairial of the year XI displays a huge *Montgolfière* loaded with three thousand men, besides guns and horses, and warranted to cross the Channel whatever the weather might be. The crown to all this was a clever etching, shaped like a fan, in which the French swarm on to the inaccessible island in all sorts of fashions, and let loose the hundred and fifty thousand combatants of Boulogne. To emphasize the weakness of the defences, the artist imagines the English risen into the air on captive kites and slitting the balloons, or hacking at the keels of the French vessels, and kept afloat by swimming apparatus in which they look like a shoal not of fish-torpedoes but of torpedo-fish.

Bonneville, the engraver, had other notions. On a fan of his invention we find "the English fleet set in a blaze by Greek fire, and by fire thrown from those new floating towers, provided to safeguard a French descent on the English coast at low tide. Favourable winds impel thousands of balloons, which, rising to an agreed height, rain a fiery deluge upon the English ships." Even in our own time, the native gift of the Gascon has never been pushed farther! These friendly winds, which were to work the ruin of "perfidious Albion" at a certain day and hour; these silk engines which were of themselves to destroy the most redoubtable of fleets, were *chefs-d'œuvre*. If fashions change, even in fans, human nature remains the same.

Another creation of Bonneville's bore a map of Europe, on which, in a *cartouche,* the hero of Arcola appeared in a chariot drawn by tritons. In his hands he waved a flag with a motto in two languages :

LIBERTÉ DES MERS. — LIBERTAD DE LOS MARES

On it the aerostatic crotcheteers were represented only by a balloon, a parachute, and a microscopic ship, relegated to a corner.

Early in the November of 1803, Buonaparte betook himself to Boulogne to inspect the preparations on the coast. He had public opinion at his




MER DU SUD
MER DU NORD
Nº 2. F.

back, as the publication of these naïve sheets proved. His journey gave a new opportunity; and we find him on horseback, followed by "gardes-françaises"—the fan-makers did not look into things too closely—visiting the camp, superintending the preparations for defence and attack. "He laughs longest who laughs last," says a caricature in which he makes mock of George the Third——

In the midst of all these threatenings, it occurred to one Martin La Bastide to unite the two great Oceans by providing a way for ships across the Isthmus of Panama. A month before the First Consul's journey to Boulogne, on the 12th of Vendémiaire of the Year XII, he deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale two samples of a fan on which his idea was explained. The idea itself was twelve years old, for in 1791, he had suggested it in Laborde's *Histoire abrégée de la mer du Sud.*

La Bastide was not a great financier, he had no ambition to attract the capital of the world; he pierced nothing; the backbone of his scheme was to utilise the lake in the interior of Nicaragua, uniting it to the Atlantic by the San Juan river, and to the Pacific by a stream which flows south-westwards into the Gulf of Papagayo.

Martin turned to Spain for help. The two rivers and the lake made up between them, a length of transit amounting to about 240 miles; but, said Martin, the lake affords a basin in which ships can move at their ease; the climate is fresh and wholesome, so much so that the country has been called the Paradise of Mahomet. It might become a central *entrepôt* for the commerce of the world. "The advantages of such a means of communication would be incalculable. It is impossible to believe that the Spanish Court can hesitate to give effect to the unanimous hopes of mankind, and to increase the general welfare of nations."

The map was adorned by an engraved and illuminated allegory: "Mercury, the god of Commerce, points with his caduceus to the passage from one sea to the other, and with his right hand invites the nations to address the King of Spain and to demand from him in return for a tribute the right of way so greatly desired."

Opposite to this appeared "the King of Spain; he looks admiringly at Fame, who with one hand points to the union of the hemispheres, and

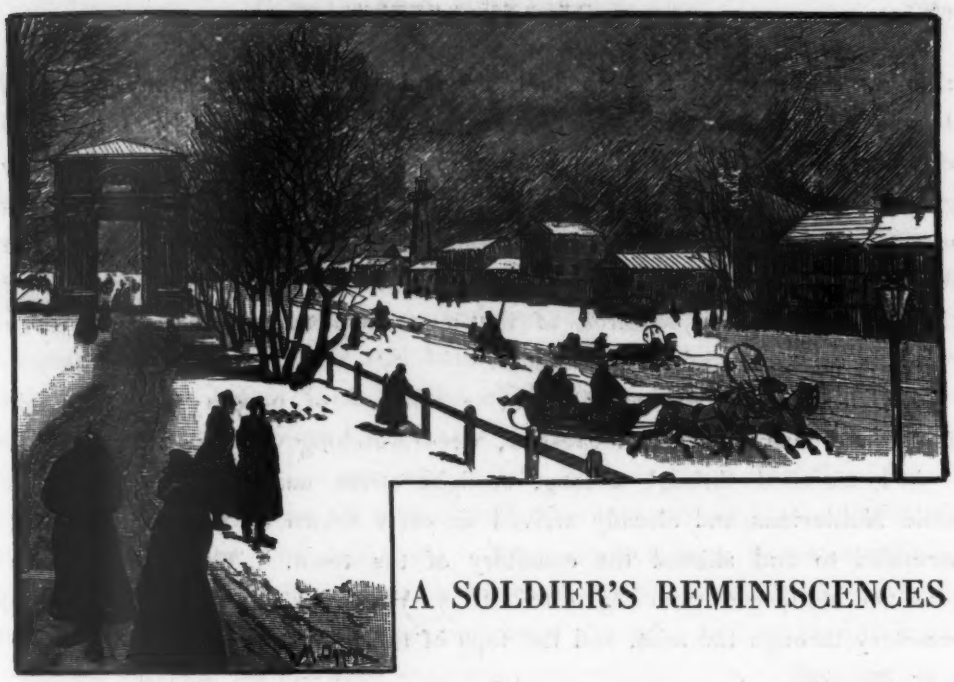
with the other promises him the crown of immortality, if he will but open a gate that must lead to the greater happiness of the world."

On the reverse La Bastide attacks that famous North-West passage which Vancouver had been seeking a few years before. "Suppose that passage discovered to what disappointments it would lead! To what accidents would it not be liable! For eight months in the year it would be impossible to get near it, while at the best the way it would open into the Pacific would be an enormous *détour*." Everything, in fact, favoured the passage by Lake Nicaragua. Unfortunately, Martin had his fans and his eloquence for his pains. Fame failed to convince the Catholic King, and not even Mercury could seduce the nations into enthusiasm. And yet three years later a child was born who, after an interval of eighty years, was to breathe life into the dream of the unlucky geographer, and to lead Mercury to triumph! But, alas, where is La Bastide, where are the King of Spain and the Paradise of Mahomet?

Where is the Fan of the People?

HENRI BOUCHOT.





A SOLDIER'S REMINISCENCES

I

On the 4th May, 1877, I arrived at Kichineff and at once learnt that the 56th division of Infantry was expected there very shortly.

As I had come to join the first regiment which should pass through on its way to the seat of war, on the 7th May, at four o'clock in the morning, I was to be seen in the ranks in front of the quarters of the officer commanding the 222nd regiment. I had a grey capote, red epaulettes with blue edging, a képi with a band of the latter colour, a knapsack at my back, a cartridge-box attached to my belt, and a heavy Krinke rifle in my hand.

The band began playing; the colours were brought out from the Colonel's house; the regiment presented arms in silence; then a great clamour arose: the colonel had given the word of command, which was forthwith repeated by the commanders of battalions, the commanders of companies, and the non-commissioned officers. All this produced a great hubbub, of which I could scarcely understand anything. It finished by the regiment forming a long column, which then began moving with regular steps to the sound of a spirited march. I, of course, was

also on the move, trying to lock up and keep time with my comrade. I was pulled backward by the knapsack, and forward by the heavy cartridge-box; the rifle slipped from my shoulder, and the collar of my grey cloak fretted my neck. But, in spite of all these little inconveniences, the music, the order in which the troops were marching, the freshness of the morning air, the bristling of the bayonets, the sight of the swarthy, rugged features of the men, inspired one and all with a resolute calmness and determination.

Notwithstanding the early hour, a number of people were at their doors, and many, only half-dressed, were watching us from the windows.

We marched through a long, straight street near the bazaar, where some Moldavians had already arrived in carts drawn by oxen. The road ascended to and skirted the cemetery of the town. The morning was cold and dull, and rain began to fall. We could see the trees of the cemetery through the mist, and the tops of the tombstones were discernible over the wall.

We turned off from the cemetery, leaving it on our right. It seemed to look at us with astonishment and say : "Why are you going off in thousands, to die so far away in a foreign land, when you could die here quietly, and lie under these wooden crosses and these slabs of stone? Stay here!"

But we kept on, impelled by a secret, mysterious force, as powerful as any that controls or influences humanity. Every one would have liked to go back again, but we all marched on, obedient to discipline, not to the idea of a good cause, or to the hatred of an unknown enemy, or to the fear of punishment; but to that occult power which, for a long time to come, will lead men to sanguinary strifes.

Behind the cemetery lay a wide, deep valley which faded away in the mist. The rain was falling fast; yet, here and there, in the distance, streaks of light appeared between the clouds, and the slanting lines of rain, lighted by the sun, looked like silver. The mist floated over the green slopes of the valley, and through it could be seen long columns of troops ahead of us. Now and then a bayonet gleamed, as it caught a ray of light, twinkled like a star, and was gone. The clouds became

thicker and obscured the light, and the rain increased. An hour after starting, I seemed to have a stream of water running down my back.

It had been arranged that our first day's march should not be a long one, eighteen versts in all, from Kichineff to the village of Gaureni. But not yet accustomed to the carrying of a weight of from twenty-five to thirty pounds, when I reached the hut where we were to be lodged for the night, I was unable to sit down, and, resting against the wall, with my knapsack on my back, and still holding my gun, I remained motionless for ten minutes before I could take off my accoutrements. One of the men going to the canteen to get his dinner had pity on me, and took my iron pot with him to get my ration; but on his return I was fast asleep. I did not wake till four o'clock the next morning, when I heard the bugle sounding the departure. Five minutes later I was marching along a muddy road, in a fine rain which seemed as if it filtered through a sieve. Immediately in front of me moved the grey back of an unknown comrade, carrying his calf-skin knapsack, and with his rifle at the shoulder; on either side of me, and at my back, other grey figures, like the one in front, kept moving on. During the first few days I could not tell one from the other.

The 222nd regiment of Infantry was formed mostly of Wiatka and Kostroma peasants. They were broad-faced, with prominent cheek-bones and small grey eyes, hair and beard blond and colourless, and all were bronzed by their march. I could remember certain names, but could not identify them with any of the faces. At the end of a fortnight, I could not understand how it happened that I had confused two of my neighbours, the one who marched by my side, and the one who marched with the owner of the grey back which was ever present to my view. I called them indifferently Fedorow and Titkow, and was always wrong, although they did not resemble one another in the least.

Fedorow, who was a corporal, was a young man about twenty-three years of age, of medium height, and of slim, even elegant build. He had regular, well-moulded features; his nose, mouth, and chin were of an extreme delicacy, his beard light and curly, his eyes blue and laughing. When they called out, "Singers in front," he led the chorus in our

company. He sang popular songs in a tenor voice, introducing the most piercing falsetto notes.

He was a native of the government of Wladimir, and had gone to St. Petersburg when quite a child. For a wonder the "civilisation" of the capital had not spoilt, but merely polished him. He read the newspapers, and could explain a host of scientific words. "You know, Wladimir Michailowitch," he said to me, "I have more reasoning than old Titkow, for Petersburg—that is, civilisation—has had its influence on me, while in a village there is nothing but ignorance and barbarism. But as Titkow is a man of years, and has seen many things, and acquired the experience that comes from the vicissitudes of life, I won't say anything against him. He is forty years old, and I am only twenty-three, although I am corporal in the company."

Titkow was a thick-set peasant of apparently uncommon strength, and always wore a reserved, taciturn look. He had a swarthy complexion, high cheek-bones, and small downcast eyes. He never smiled, and spoke only at rare intervals. A carpenter by trade, he was on unlimited furlough at the moment of the mobilization; a few months more, and he would have obtained his discharge. War, however, was declared, and Titkow had to start for the army, leaving behind a wife and five children. Although his appearance was not prepossessing, and his manner was always gloomy, there was something about him sympathetic and genuine.

At the present time it seems to me incomprehensible that I can ever have confounded these two men; but, for the first few days, I only saw them dressed alike in grey, and equally loaded, fatigued and benumbed.

All the first half of the month was rainy, and we had no tents. The interminable clayey road climbed a hill and descended into a valley almost at every verst. Walking was difficult. Our feet were covered with mud, the sky, heavy with clouds, poured down on us, without peace or truce, a small rain; there was no hope, on arriving at our sleeping quarters, of drying and warming ourselves. The Roumanians would not allow us to enter their houses; and besides, it was a physical impossibility to lodge so many people; so we passed through the town or village and halted in a meadow. "Halt! Dress!"

As soon as we had taken a little warm food, we had to lie down then and there in the mud, with water above us, water beneath us, and our bodies soaked. After trembling and twisting about in our cloaks, a moist warmth gradually took possession of our bodies, and we slept soundly until the call again roused us. Then it was the same thing over again : the long grey column, the grey sky, the muddy road, the sad, humid valleys and hills. It was hard work for the men!

"Heaven's flood-gates are open," said Karpow, the non-commissioned officer of our half of the company, with a deep sigh. He was an old soldier and had gone through the Khiva campaign. "It's getting worse and worse!"

"But it won't last long, Wassili Karpowitch; the sun will soon come out and dry us. The campaign will be a long one, and there will be time enough to be soaked and dried by turns, before it's over."

"Michailowitch," asked my neighbour, "is the Danube far?"

"It will take us another three weeks to reach it."

"Three weeks! But we've already been two on the road."

"We're getting into the devil's clutches," growled old Titkow.

"Why, you old devil yourself, Titkow, what have you to complain of? You upset every one. What devil's claws are you talking about? What do you mean?"

"Do you think, then, we are out for a holiday?" replied Titkow.

"No, it's not for a holiday, but we have to do our duty. When you took the oath, you said you wouldn't spare your life. So, mind what you are saying, you old growler!"

"What are you making all this fuss about, Wassili Karpowitch? Am I hanging back? If we are to be killed, be it so; it's all one to me. Don't I keep up with the others? If we've got to die, well, die we must. I don't care how it is."

"Well, go on, and don't let me catch you talking again."

Titkow keeps silent, his face assuming an aspect more and more morose. Besides, nobody wants to talk; it is as much as we can do to walk. Our feet slip about, and the men often fall into the sticky mud. Oaths are heard throughout the battalion. Only Fedorow pushes

on with any heart, and without a pause tells me about St. Petersburg and his country home.

Everything however comes to an end, and one morning, after bivouacking near a village, where we were to pass the day, when I awoke I saw a blue sky, white cottages, and orchards bathed in a joyous sun. I heard deep voices which had become cheerful once again. All the men had risen with alacrity : here, after the fatigues of a ten days' march in the rain and without shelter, we were to rest. During the day our tents arrived, and we at once began to set them up. The pegs were fixed, the canvas stretched, and then every one lay down in the shade.

"They have not saved us from the rain, but they are going to protect us from the sun."

"Yes, they will prevent the sun spoiling your good looks, sir," said Fedorow ironically, giving me a wink as he spoke.

* * *

There were only two officers to our company, Captain Saikine, who was in command, and Ensign Stebelkow. The former was in the prime of life, stout, and good-humoured; Stebelkow was quite a youth, fresh from school. They were on good terms with each other; the Captain had received the Ensign as a son, and shared his rations with him; and, when it rained, went so far as to divide his only waterproof cloak with him. When the tents were distributed, the two officers kept together, and as their tent was spacious, the Captain decided to take me also.

Worn out by a sleepless night—our company had been told off to assist the waggon-train, and had passed the night in bringing the waggons out of the ravines, and from the streams which had overflowed their banks —as soon as dinner was over, I slept soundly. The Captain's orderly woke me with a gentle touch on the shoulder.

"M. Ivanow, M. Ivanow," he said in a low voice, taking all sorts of precautions, as if he feared waking me.

"What is it?"

"The Captain wishes to see you." Seeing me put on my sword-belt and bayonet, he added: "His Excellency says you are to come just as your are."

Quite a company had gathered in Saikine's tent. Besides the rightful owners there were two other officers; one of them being the aide-de-camp of the regiment, and the other the commander of the company of sharp-shooters, Wenzel.

In 1877 the battalion numbered five companies and not four as now. When on the march, the sharp-shooters were behind, so that the last ranks of our company joined on to the first ranks of the sharp-shooters—— I walked in the last ranks, and many a time did I hear very disparaging remarks made about Captain Wenzel.

The four officers were seated round a case which served as a table, and upon which they had placed a *samovar,* plates, etc., and a bottle. They were taking tea.

"Now, then, M. Ivanow!" cried the Captain, "Nikita, a cup, a goblet, a glass—anything will do. Now then, Wenzel, make a place for him, and let him sit down."

Wenzel rose and bowed very politely. He was a young man, spare and rather short, pale and nervous. "What restless eyes and thin lips!" I remarked to myself.

The aide-de-camp, without rising, stretched out his hand to me, and said: "My name is Loukine."

I did not feel at ease. The officers were silent; Wenzel was taking rum with his tea, the aide-de-camp was smoking a short pipe, Ensign Stebelkow nodded to me, and went on reading a book, the loose leaves of which were scattered about. It was a translation of some foreign novel, and made the whole campaign at the bottom of his trunk, went as far as the banks of the Danube, and returned to Russia in a still more pitiable condition.

The Captain poured some tea into an earthenware bowl, and swamped it with a large quantity of rum.

"Here, take that, Mr. Student, and make allowance for any of our shortcomings. I'm a plain-speaking man myself, and we are all very

simple people, while you are a very learned man and ought to be lenient to us. Isn't it so?"

And, with that, he seized my wrist with his broad hand as a bird would its prey, and, shaking it several times, looked at me with a friendly expression on his face.

"You are a student, then?" asked Wenzel.

"I have been one, Captain."

He smiled pleasantly and looked at me with his restless eyes. I recalled what the soldiers had said about him, and began to doubt their veracity.

"Why do you call me, 'Captain?' In this tent you are at home, and with friends. You are here simply an intelligent man among his equals," he said quietly.

"Intelligent? there's no mistake about that," cried Saikine. "He's a student. I like students although they are very noisy. I should have been one myself if destiny had not been against me."

"What has destiny had to do with you particularly, Ivan Platonowitch?" asked the aide-de-camp.

"I was never able to prepare. I could manage mathematics up to a certain point, but all beyond was incomprehensible to me. Literature, orthography—— You will hardly believe that at the standard-bearers' school, they could never teach me to write. Upon my word of honour!——"

"Do you know, Mr. Student," said the aide-de-camp to me, as he blew out two immense puffs of smoke, "that Ivan Platonowitch makes four blunders over the word *encore?*"

"Come, none of your nonsense, old man!" said Captain Saikine, holding his finger up in a menacing way.

"Upon my word, he writes *'amkor.'* It's rather good, isn't it?" and the aide-de-camp burst out laughing.

"Now, shut up. You put an 's' in 'table,' and for an aide-de-camp that's too bad!"

The aide-de-camp laughed again. Ensign Stebelkow, whose mouth at the moment was full of tea, swallowed it the wrong way, spluttered over his book, extinguished one of the two candles which lighted the tent,

and also set me laughing. Ivan Platonowitch, enchanted with his own facetiousness, filled the tent with peals of deep-toned laughter. Wenzel alone kept serious.

"Did you say literature, Ivan Platonowitch?" he quietly asked.

"Literature,—yes, literature, and the rest. You know it's like the man who studied geography as far as the equator, and history up to the era. But that's all humbug, and not to the point. I had a little money, and life tempted me. You see, Ivanow, I'm—— But by the bye what is your family name?"

"Wladimir Michailowitch."

"Well then, Wladimir Michailowitch, I was going to say that ever since I was a child, my brain has been disordered. You can't form any idea of what I have been up to. You know the story of the little boy: 'Once on a time there was a little boy who had a purse full of money. He wasted it and had to take a situation.' I enlisted as standard-bearer in this excellent regiment. Although quite a soldier by nature, I was sent to school; but that was not of much use, and I've had to work like a galley-slave for nearly twenty years. Now we are going to fight the Turks. Come, gentlemen, let us have a bumper, but no mixture. Every drop of tea spoils the drink. Let us drink, victims of war!"

"*Chair à canon,*" translated Wenzel.

"All right, let it be 'chair à canon,' if you know French," Saikine rejoined. "I must tell you that the Captain is a man of talent and knows several languages. He can recite German verses. Listen to me, young man. I have called you here to propose that you should move into my tent. There are six men in your tent, and you must be sorely pinched for room; besides you'll have more companions than you bargain for. In every way you would be better here with me."

"Many thanks, but let me decline."

"Why? What nonsense! Nikita, bring his knapsack here. Which is your tent?"

"The second on the right. But permit me once more to decline, and to remain where I am, that is with the men with whom I shall have to live. Let me keep entirely with them."

The Captain looked at me attentively as though he would read my thoughts. After a moment's reflection he said :

"Do you wish to live in close intimacy with them?"

"Yes, if possible."

"You're quite right. Don't move then. I respect your sentiments." And again seizing my hand in his broad palm, he set to shaking it vigorously.

A little later I bade the officers good-night and left the tent. Night was drawing on, the soldiers put on their capotes, and got ready for the tattoo which was on the point of being beaten. The companies ranged themselves in lines so as to form a hollow square of each battalion, with the tents and piled arms in the middle. That day, owing to the halt, the entire division assembled together. The drummers beat the retreat, and from afar were heard the words of command :

"Regiments to prayers—Hats off!"

And twelve thousand men stood bare-headed.

"Our Father which art in Heaven," began our company, and the others continued the prayer, which was intoned by sixty choruses of two hundred men each. The result was discordant it is true ; nevertheless the prayer resounded with a telling and grandiose effect. The choruses were gradually silenced, and in the distance on the edge of the camp, the last company sang—"But deliver us from evil." Then followed a short roll of drums.

"Hats on!"

The men then prepared for the night's rest. In our tent where, as in all the others, six men were extended on a surface of two square *sagenes,* my place was at the side. I lay on my back and for a long time watched the stars and the distant bivouac fires, and listened to the hollow, indistinct noise of the camp. In a neighbouring tent, I could hear some one telling a story, in which the word "then" was repeated incessantly :

"*Then* the prince went to his wife and began to explain to her. *Then* she——"

"Lioutoukow, are you going to sleep?" cried the same voice. "Ah!



well, go to sleep then, and Heaven and the Virgin Mary, and all the patron Saints bless you," murmured the story-teller, and said no more.

They were also talking in the officers' tent. The candles burning in their midst threw curious burlesque silhouettes on to the canvas sides. From time to time I could hear bursts of laughter, which must have proceeded from the aide-de-camp. A sentinel with his rifle on his shoulder was walking to and fro, while in front of us, where the artillery were encamped, I could see another sentinel with sword in hand. The stamping of the horses was heard in the distance, and I could even hear the noise which they made as they champed their oats. I remembered having noted just such an experience at my home in the country in the court-yard of the farm, on a similar, mild, starry night. *Ursa major* shone very low on the horizon, much lower than at home. As I watched the pole-star I said to myself that that was in the direction of St. Petersburg, where I had left my mother, my friends, and all. Well-known constellations glittered overhead; the Milky Way was limpid, its luminous zone shining with a calm yet glorious brightness. More to the south, large groups of stars with which I was unacquainted, lighted their red or greenish fires.

I asked myself: As we go further on, beyond the Danube and the Balkans, perhaps as far as Constantinople, shall I still see new stars, and what will they be?

I had no inclination for sleep, but got up and began walking upon the dew-covered grass between our battalion and the artillery. A figure approached me in the darkness. By the sword which hung at its side I saw that it was an officer, and as he drew near I stood aside to salute him. It was Wenzel.

"Are you restless to-night, Wladimir Michailowitch?" he asked in a quiet tone.

"I have not been able to get to sleep, Captain."

"My name is Peter Nicolaewitch—— I also am unable to get to sleep. I stayed a long time behind at your commander's tent, but at last I got tired. They began playing at cards and drinking—— What a lovely night!"

He walked by my side, and when we had reached the end of the line of tents, we turned and retraced our steps for a long time in silence. Wenzel was the first to speak.

"Didn't you join the army of your own will?"

"Certainly."

"What attraction is there in it for you?"

"How can I answer you?" I said, without entering into unnecessary details. "Principally the desire of experiencing sensations to me hitherto unknown, and to see——"

"And probably to learn to know the people in the person of its representative, the soldier?" interposed Wenzel. It was too dark to distinguish the expression of his face; but the tone of his voice was ironical. He continued :

"What study can you make of our mode of life, when we can only think of arriving at the bivouac to fall asleep immediately? But jesting aside, tell me why you did not wish to lodge in your commander's tent. Is it possible that you attach importance to the opinions of these peasants?"

"Yes, just as I should to the opinion of any other men whom I have no reason to despise."

"I perfectly understand; but at the present time it's a matter of fashion, for which literature itself is responsible, to make the peasant the pearl of creation."

"It's not a question of pearls with me," I replied; "it is quite enough to regard them as men. That alone is something."

"Let us have an end to this, and no false sentiment. Who regards them as anything but men? But what sort of men? That's the question. However we will talk of something else."

Our conversation did not flag. Wenzel had evidently read a great deal, and, as Saikine had told me, knew several languages. The commander's remark that Wenzel learnt verses by heart was also verified. Speaking of the French, Wenzel attacked the poets of the realistic school, and, passing on in his review to the decade from 1830 to 1840, he recited with feeling "La Nuit de Décembre" of Alfred de Musset. His delivery

was excellent and marked by much simplicity and expression. When he had finished the piece, he was silent for a moment, and then added :

"Yes, it's beautiful; but all the French put together are not worth ten lines of Schiller, Goethe, or Shakespeare."

It appeared that before taking command of the company, he had had the charge of the regimental library, and had attentively studied the Russian literature of the day. In speaking of this, he severely judged what he called its brutal direction. Then the conversation fell back on our original subject, Wenzel arguing with much vehemence.

"When I joined the regiment, almost a child, I had not the same opinions as those I profess to-day. I tried to convince by argument, and to acquire a moral influence over my men; but a year had not passed before they had entirely transformed me. All that my reading had taught me clashed violently with the reality, and I became aware that it was all vain sentiment."

He made a movement with his hand, but the darkness hindered me from understanding it.

"What do you mean, Peter Nicolaewitch?" I said.

"Why, the only argument that reaches them is a blow with the fist," he replied in a callous tone. "Good-night. It's time to go and lie down."

I saluted him and regained my tent with mingled feelings of grief and disgust. I thought every one was asleep; but two minutes after I had lain down, Fedorow, who was lying next to me, said :

"Michailowitch, are you asleep?"

"No."

"You've been walking with Wenzel?"

"Yes."

"How does he behave with you? Is he quiet?"

"Yes, he's quite polite."

"Ah! that's what it is to be with one's equals. He's a different man with us."

"Why? Is he very passionate?"

"He is, worse luck! In the second company of sharp-shooters, his blows fall like rain. He's a savage, a brute!"

Saying this, Fedorow went to sleep. The only answer I got to my next question, was a snore. I wrapped myself up in my cloak, my ideas became confused, and I slept in my turn.

***

After the rain we had warm weather. We had quitted the by-roads where our feet sank in the soddened earth, and we were now on the paved road leading from Yassy to Bucharest. Those who made the journey from Tekoutsch to Berlad will remember all their life our first day's march. The thermometer was 110 in the shade. The distance to be covered was forty-eight versts. There was not a breath of wind; a cloud of chalky dust kicked up by the thousand feet of our battalion hung over the road, entered the nostrils and mouth, covered the hair so thickly that it was impossible to distinguish the colour, and mingling with the perspiration which streamed from our foreheads, plastered our faces with a thick layer of mud, which made us all look like negroes. We were in uniform, and not in our shirt sleeves, which would have been some relief to us in this march. Why we had to keep on our uniforms, I do not know. The sun heated the dark-coloured tunics, and the varnish of our képis. It was intolerable. We could feel through the soles of our boots the burning pebbles of the road; the men were gasping for breath; the wells were unfortunately at distant intervals, and those that we did come across were almost dry, as the columns in front of us drank the little water they found in them; and when our turn came and we had forced our way with fists and elbows to get a drink, there was nothing but a few drops of brackish water, more like mud than a liquid. When this water, bad as it was, failed us, the men dropped exhausted. During the day ninety men were thus rendered incapable of continuing the journey, and three died of sunstroke.

Seeing the men fall in this way, I took the precaution, when at Tekoutsch, to get a large pumpkin, holding perhaps as much as four bottles; and many a time during the journey I filled it with water, which I afterwards shared with my comrades. In spite of our efforts to push

forward, the heat got the upper hand of us, our legs gave way, our bodies swayed as if intoxicated, our inflamed faces were terrible to behold through the layer of mud which covered them, and our hands convulsively grasped the rifles. A mouthful of water brings us round for a brief moment; but here and there a man loses all consciousness and falls senseless on the interminable, dusty road.

"Fatigue men!" cries a hoarse voice. They have to raise the sufferer, carry him to the side of the road, and attend to him, though they are scarcely in better plight than himself. The ditches on both sides of the road are full of exhausted soldiers. Fedorow and Titkow march at my side, and, although they are visibly suffering, hold out bravely.

The heat acts upon them differently according to their temperaments, forcibly bringing out their distinctive characteristics. Fedorow is silent, but gives a sigh every now and then; his eyes, generally so bright and clear, are now blood-shot and cast anxious glances around. Old Titkow blusters and growls :

"Look at them falling, and almost knocking your eye out with their bayonets!" he shouts, as he turns aside the rifle of a man who sinks down in front of him. "Holy Virgin, where are we going to? I believe if it hadn't been for that infernal German, I should have given way myself."

"What infernal German are you talking of?"

"The second in command. He's on duty to-day, marching in the rear. It's better to go on, or he would do us some harm. He won't leave an inch of our bodies unbruised."

The men had nicknamed Wenzel "the German."

I fell out of the ranks. It was a little easier to walk on the edge of the road; the dust was less, and one was not jostled so often. Many others did the same; for on this day of suffering, the exigences of military duty, and the regularity of a march, were somewhat relaxed.

I had got separated from my detachment, and found myself in the rear of the column.

Wenzel came up. His strength was nearly spent, he was almost suffocated, but his resolute spirit sustained him.

"What do you think of this?" he asked in a husky voice. "Let us walk at the side. I'm used up."

"Do you want any water?"

I handed him my improvised flask, from which he drank eagerly several short drafts.

"Thanks, I'm better now. What a day!"

We walked on some time, side by side, in silence.

"By the bye," he asked, "you have not yet taken up your quarters with Ivan Platonowitch?"

"No, I have not."

"It's stupid of you. Excuse my speaking so freely. But there! I must leave you now, and fall in behind the column. Those men are sluggish. See how they are dropping."

I had gone but a few steps further, when I turned round and saw Wenzel leaning over a man lying on the ground and shaking him by the arm.

"Get up, you scoundrel, get up!" he shouted.

I did not recognize my fine talker. He was cursing and swearing like a maniac. The soldier had almost lost consciousness, and looked despairingly at the officer, who was beyond himself with rage and spluttered :

"Get up—get up, at once. Eh? you won't. Well, take that,—and that,—and that."

Wenzel had taken the scabbard of his sabre and was belabouring the shoulders and bruised arms of the soldier with it. I was no longer master of myself, and I drew near and cried :

"Peter Nicolaewitch!"

He did not answer me, but said to the man :

"Come, are you going to get up?" As he said this he raised his arm as if about to strike again; and it was with great difficulty that I held it back.

Then he turned round and looked at me, scowling and presenting a frightful appearance, with his eyes starting out of his head, and mouth convulsed.

He drew his arm rapidly away, and I expected he would transfer his rage to me, as I had been guilty of one of the gravest faults against army discipline; but he spoke calmly.

"Listen, Ivanow. Never do that again. If an officer of fortune had been in my place, such as Schourow or Timofeew, you would have paid dearly for this folly. You must not forget that you are a soldier, and that for an offence of this kind, you could be shot without any trial."

"I don't care," I replied. "I couldn't stand by and see what you were doing without interfering."

"That's a sentiment which does you honour; but save it for other occasions. Do you think it possible to deal with these brutes in any other way?" And his face assumed a look of contempt, or, I should say, hatred. "Out of every ten of these skulking soldiers lying along the route, there are only two or three really ill. I don't want to be cruel, it is not my nature; we must, however, keep up the credit of the regiment. If they could understand reason, I would speak to them, but talking has no effect. They are only sensible to physical pain, and that is why I strike them."

I did not wish to hear more, so pressed forward to regain my company, which was now rather a long way ahead. I came up with Fedorow and Titkow just as the battalion had left the road for the plain and the word to halt had been given.

"Michailitch, what have you and Captain Wenzel been talking about?" Fedorow asked me, as I sank exhausted at his side, having scarcely had time to ground my rifle.

"Talking!" murmured Titkow. "You call that talking? Why, I saw you seize his arm. Ah! M. Ivanow, be on your guard against the German. Although he likes to speak with you, he'll have his revenge sooner or later."

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Very late in the evening we arrived at Fachchani. We passed through the dark, silent little town, and got on to the plain beyond. We could

not see at all, and the battalions placed themselves anyhow. The men were so fatigued that they fell fast asleep, without touching the dinner which had been prepared for them. With the Russian soldier, the meals are always "dinner," whether in the early morning, in the daytime, or in the evening.

Stragglers came in all through the night. At day-break we started off again with the consolation that when this march was over we should have a day's rest. Everything was repeated : the same columns moved on, with the same knapsacks bruising the benumbed shoulders of the men, and the same pains torturing their swollen, bleeding feet.

During the first ten versts, scarcely, if at all, had we any idea of what we were doing. Our brief sleep had not been sufficient to dispel the fatigues of yesterday, and we advanced only half-awake. I had gone to sleep so completely on the march, that when we halted I could not conceive how the ten versts had been covered, nor had I the faintest remembrance of any of the localities which we had passed through. But the moment we halted and the columns dressed and formed into line, we woke up with the joyful anticipation of an hour's rest. We could now put off our heavy burdens, boil some water, lie down at ease, and drink our scalding tea.

As soon as our arms are laid down and knapsacks taken off, we search for fuel, which, for the most part, consists of the light dry stems of the maize of last year. Two bayonets are stuck in the ground, and on a ramrod lying across from one to the other are hung two or three pots. The fuel burns up with a clear, bright, and cheerful blaze. The fagots are piled to windward, the flames lick the blackened canteens, and in ten minutes the water is boiling furiously. Tea is then thrown in, and time given for it to brew; and in this way a very strong and almost black liquid is obtained. No such thing as sugar. We had tea served out in such abundance that it was smoked when there was no tobacco to be had, and it was drunk incessantly; but the ration of sugar was infinitesimal.

It will appear singular perhaps that I enter into all these details, but the life of a soldier, when campaigning, is so rough, so full of priva-

tions and sufferings, he has so little hope in the future, that tea, or any delicacy whatsoever, constitutes a real enjoyment. To understand the importance attached to a drop of tea, it would be necessary to see the serious look that the sunburnt, wild features of young and old,—though scarcely any were above forty—wore on these occasions. Like true children they made up the fire by adding stalk after stalk beneath the pots, and mutually aided one another with advice over this serious operation.

"Now then, Loutikow, put a bit here,—on this side,—there,—yes, that's the place,—it's burning up now—the water will boil soon."

Tea, every now and then, and—in cold rainy weather—a glass of brandy, and a pipe, these are the joys of a soldier; but we must not omit sleep, the repairer of all ills, which causes us to forget physical sufferings, cares, and the future. Tobacco played by no means an unimportant part among these small comforts. It soothed and sustained the overwrought nerves. Ten or a dozen men would pass a well-rammed pipe from mouth to mouth, and when it came back to the owner, he would take another last whiff, shake out the ash, and put the pipe back again in the leg of his boot. I cannot forget the vexation which one of my comrades caused me when he lost my pipe, nor his own vexation and confusion. You would have fancied that he had lost a treasure which had been confided to him.

When we halted in the middle of the day, we rested an hour or two. After having taken tea, we tried to get some sleep. There was complete silence. Only the sentinel walked to and fro, keeping guard in front of the flag. We had lain down on the ground with our heads on our knapsacks, and remained in a state which was neither sleeping nor waking; the powerful sun burnt our faces and necks, the flies stung and tormented us, and would not permit us to get quite off to sleep. Dreams mingled with reality; we had just quitted a life so different, that in the lulling which precedes sleep, we imagined that we were going to wake up at home, in the midst of our ordinary occupations, that the vast plain and barren soil, where thistles mimicked verdure, the implacable sun and dry wind, those thousands of men in white shirts and covered with

dust, and those piles of arms, would disappear as a strange vision.

"Up!" cries Major Tchernoglasow, the chief of the battalion, a small, bearded man, dwelling on the word in a harsh, loud voice. The white shirts stir, the men stretch themselves and grumble, get up, put on their cartridge-boxes and knapsacks, and dress.

"To arms!"

We then go and look for our rifles. I perfectly remember mine, No. 18635, the butt-end a little deeper in colour than that of the others, and on the varnish a long scratch.

Another word of command, and the battalion, stretching out, wheels on to the road. Right in front they lead the commander's horse, a bay stallion; he arches his neck and shoulders, and paws and strikes the ground with his foot. The Major, who only mounts him in extreme cases, follows him on foot, keeping step with his men; he wishes to let them see that their chief himself can put up with the fatigues and discomforts of the foot-soldier, and the men are pleased and like him for it. He is always collected and calm, never jests or smiles, is up before any one else in the morning, and retires last. Though firm and reserved with his men, he never allows himself to raise his hand, or to grumble without good reason; and they say that if the Major were not there, Wenzel would have shown a far worse temper.

The weather to-day is not so hot as yesterday. We are no longer advancing along the paved road, but following a narrow path along the railway; many of the men walk in the grass. There is no dust, the heavy clouds are massed together, large drops of rain fall at intervals, and now and then we hold out our hands to make sure that the rain has not already begun. Even the laggards of yesterday have taken courage; there is not now before us a long fatiguing march; scarcely another ten versts, and then the halt so long looked forward to—not a night only, but the whole of the next day, and another night besides. The men wish to sing. Fedorow leads with the famous song beginning:

"It was under fire at Poltava——"

Having sung the passage where mention is made of a bullet passing

through the Czar's hat, he begins another song which, in spite of its being so meaningless, is, however, one of the most popular with the men; it tells of a certain Lisette, who encounters her black lover in the wood, and of the sequel; then comes the historical song of Peter summoned by the Senate; and, to finish, he gives the song of the regiment :

"The white Czar, our Emperor, has come.

"Come, my friends, tighten your belts. Attention.

"Our appearance has been considered perfect, and the Czar has expressed his satisfaction to us.

"The Commander of our battalion, M. Tchernoglasow,

"Without sleeping or slumbering drilled his men.

"Mounted on his horse, he cares for nobody."

And so on for fifty couplets.

"Fedorow, why do you sing that song of *Lisette,* which has neither head nor tail?" I asked him one day; and I mentioned to him some others as foolish as they were cynical, in which the cynicism was so overdone as to lose all kind of meaning, and was no better than a string of words put together at random.

"Well, you know, it comes into my head without my thinking about it," he replied. "But, after all, I don't look upon it as a song? Isn't it rather an exercise for the lungs, a succession of cries which put a little spirit into our march?"

No sooner are the singers tired, than the band begins. How much more easy it is to march to the sound of a sonorous, rhythmic, sprightly tune! Then even the most fatigued nearly always look so much brighter and keep so well in step and in line, that it seems hardly possible they can be the same men. But when the music stops, all the factitious energy evoked by it disappears, and I have more than once felt that I must have fainted and fallen down, had not a halt opportunely been called which enabled us to regain a little strength.

We had gone about five versts, after resuming our march, when we met with a slight hindrance. We were proceeding along a valley in which a small river flowed, and our path was flanked on one side by

hills, and on the other by a narrow but lofty railway embankment. The recent rains had inundated the bottom of the valley, and formed across our route a large pool of about thirty *sagenes*. The embankment rose out of the water like a dyke and afforded us a dry footing. The man on duty let the first battalion pass and they got beyond the pool without much trouble; but when our turn came he told us that a train was expected every minute and we must wait for it to pass. Accordingly we halted, and had scarcely laid down our rifles when we saw the well-known carriage of the General of our brigade turn the corner of the road.

The General was a daring man and of gigantic build. And his voice! I have never heard a voice which could be compared with his, neither at the Opera nor in a cathedral choir. His lower notes sounded like those of a bugle. His massive head, with full black beard and whiskers blown about by the wind, his bushy dark eyebrows shading his small eyes which looked like two glowing pieces of coal, and his flushed visage, gave him, when on horseback at the head of his brigade, an inspired look. One day, at Moscow, on the field of Hodinski, during some manœuvres, he was so conspicuous by his bold martial bearing, that an old citizen became quite enthusiastic and cried :

"Ah! there's a brave fellow! That's the kind of man we want," and since then he had always been called the 'brave.'

His thoughts dwelt on nothing but warlike deeds, and he carried with him, during the whole campaign, a few odd volumes of a military history. I know this only from hearsay, for personally I very rarely had an opportunity of seeing the General, and on those occasions it was mostly as he overtook us in the middle of a march, in his carriage drawn by a *troïka* of fine horses. When he reached the encampment he would retire to his quarters, remain there till the morning was far advanced, and only rejoin us late in the day. Then the men would make comments on the degree of colour in his face, and of huskiness in his voice, as he cried out.

"Good morning, my *starobelzi!*"

"Good morning, your Excellency!" returned the men, adding in

an undertone : "Go and sleep off your wine, you old martinet!"

Then the General would continue his route, at times without any other incident, but occasionally not till he had sharply reprimanded the commander of some company.

Now, seeing our battalion halting, for the reason already given, he drove up and leaped out of his carriage with all the celerity that his heavy build permitted.

The Major immediately rode up and saluted him.

"What has happened? What are you stopping for? Who gave you permission?"

"The road is flooded, your Excellency, and a train is just going to pass along the line."

"Road flooded! a train! What nonsense! You are treating your men as though they were women. You've no right to stop without orders. I must put you under arrest, sir."

"But, your Excellency!——"

"Not another word!"

The general looked sternly around, and his attention was directed to another victim.

"Eh! What does this mean? Why is the officer in command of the second company of sharp-shooters not at his post? Captain Wenzel, have the goodness to come here."

Wenzel came forward, and the General overwhelmed him with abuse. Wenzel tried to justify himself and raised his voice, but his words were drowned by the shouting of the General. We judged, however, from the tone of Wenzel's voice that he was not too civil.

"You want to argue with me, you insolent fellow?" roared the General. "Silence! Take his sword away, and put him under arrest near the regimental chest! We must make an example of him. Afraid of a pond! Come, boys, follow me! Let's do as Souvorow did!"

With the stiffened gait of a man who has been seated a long time, the General hastened to place himself at the head of the battalion.

"Follow me, my men! Remember Souvorow!" he again shouted, as he stepped resolutely into the water, highly polished boots and all.

The Major, with a rueful face, looked behind him, and then closed up to the General's side. The battalion at once moved forward. At first we had the water up to our knees, then to our waists, and then higher still. The General's height allowed him to advance with ease, but the little Major struggled in the water. Like a flock of sheep crossing a ford, the men jostled one another and threw themselves from side to side in their efforts to withdraw their feet from the mud into which they sank at every step.

The commanders of companies and the aides-de-camp, who were mounted, could have crossed the pool with ease; but anxious to follow the example of the General, they got off their horses at the edge of the water and plunged in.

The men in our company were the tallest in the regiment, and passed with tolerable steadiness and regularity, while those of the 8th company, all of whom were of small stature, getting the water up to their ears, floundered about, every now and then involuntarily swallowed a gulp of the unsavoury liquid, and clutched hold of us. One little Bohemian, with pale features and large dark eyes, put both his arms round old Titkow, and dropped his rifle. Luckily for the little fellow, some one caught it as it fell; otherwise it would not have been recovered, and the man would have been severely punished for losing property belonging to the State. Ten *sagenes* further on, the swamp became shallower, and the men, now all out of danger, hurried to get on dry ground, with much jostling and lavish abuse of each other.

Many of the men in our company had a good laugh over this incident, but our neighbours by no means relished the fun. Their faces were blue from cold and fright, and the sharp-shooters who were just behind them kept calling out :

"Come, you little pigmies, are you going to get out of the water, or do you mean to be drowned?"

"It would have been an easy matter to get drowned," answered the men of the 8th company. "It's all very well for the General, who scarcely got the ends of his whiskers wet. He wanted to show himself off as a hero, but he might have drowned some of his men over it."



"Why didn't you get into my canteen? You would have got over dry," said one of our men to the Bohemian.

"Unfortunately I didn't think of it," replied the little soldier good-temperedly.

Our leader had already had time to get out of the water, and was now standing majestically at the side, surveying the greater portion of the battalion still struggling in the pool. He, of course, was soaked through and through, his clothes and beard were dripping, and the legs of his polished boots were bulging out with the water in them. He encouraged the men by still shouting out: "Forward, boys! Remember Souvorow!"

The officers, who were all equally soaked, stood round him with scowling looks. Wenzel, disarmed, was with them, and smiled dismally.

The General's coachman had drawn near the water's edge, and after sounding with his whip, got on to his seat again, and crossed a little further off on our left. He had found a ford where the water scarcely reached the axles.

"That's where we should have crossed, your Excellency," said the Major calmly to the General. "Will you allow the men to dry themselves?"

"Certainly, certainly, Sergei Nicolaitch," the General answered in a more pacific tone, the cold water having tempered his ardour. He then got into his carriage and sat down, but soon got up again and cried out at the top of his voice:

"Thanks, *starobelzi,* you are gallant fellows!"

"At your service, Excellency," the men replied; but not all of them.

Without any attempt to dry himself, the General continued his journey.

The sun was still high above the horizon, and, as we had not more than five versts further to go, the Major ordered a halt, and we undressed and lighted fires to dry our clothes, boots, knapsacks, and cartridge-boxes. Two hours later we resumed the march, laughing over our unexpected bath.

"All the same, said "Fedorow," the 'brave' has put Wenzel under arrest."

"That's nothing. He has only got to keep two days near the chest," replied one of the sharp-shooters.

"What have you got to do with it?"

"Why, it's not only a consolation for myself, but for all the company. We shall now be able to breathe in peace for a couple of days. We couldn't have stood it any longer. That's how it concerns me."

"'Suffer, Cossack, and one day you'll be Hetman', says the proverb."

"Yes, we shall have to suffer," said Titkow in his mournful voice, "but as to being Hetman, that'll probably be in the other world, should the Turk send us there."

"As to you, old chap," said Fedorow, "don't be disheartened. Just think, now. Here are we all nice and dry, while our brave General, without a dry thread on him, is rolling on his carriage, enveloped in a cloud of moisture."

All around burst out laughing.

VSEVOLOD GARSCHINE.

(*To be continued.*)



THE "COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE"

COQUELIN



COQUELIN (Jules-Constant), who nowadays goes by the name of Coquelin *aîné*, was born on the 23rd of January, 1841, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, where his family were respectable tradespeople. His father was a baker and even prided himself on being an artist in fancy bread. He reckoned on bequeathing his business to his son, but this son gave early signs of holding different views. M. Coquelin senior nobly trod under foot the prejudices of the provincial middle-class and said to the heir presumptive of his glory :

"Go and be an actor, my son, since you wish it; but understand clearly that I give my consent on condition that you become a master in your art, as I take the lead in mine."

There was then at Boulogne, where he was inspector of the library, a man who had some connection with the stage. He was the brother of Ponchard, the Ponchard who was one of the singers at the Opéra-Comique. Coquelin was acquainted with him; to him he confided his projects, asked for a letter of introduction to M. Régnier, and set foot in Paris with the openly avowed intention of entering the Conservatoire and carrying off the first prize.

First of all he went to see Régnier, who welcomed him with his habitual kindness. He pluckily explained that he had no idea of going

on the stage to cut only a middling figure there; that if the needful qualities for getting to the top of the tree were not to be detected in him, he would rather be told so at once and take the train home again : a true Coquelin! Régnier smiled paternally at this lofty declaration of principles, the like of which he must have heard more than once in his life.

The entrance examination at the Conservatoire is no joke. There is a considerable number of candidates, and there as elsewhere, though many are called, few are chosen. Coquelin good-humouredly confesses that he was anything but a success. He told me himself how Augustine Brohan, who happened to be one of the examiners, had exclaimed : "Oh, no, the youngster is too ugly! Look at his 'trumpet' nose!"

"And he uses it like a trumpet," observed M. Auber.

The fact is that at that time Coquelin spoke through his nose. The jury unanimously decided against him, with the exception of M. Régnier, who said : "Well, no, the youngster doesn't strike *me* as being so ugly! He has the snub nose, the good big mouth, the intelligent eye of the typical stage valet. Leave him to me; I will take him into my class, and make something of him."

So Coquelin joined Régnier's division. The professor began by trying hard to correct his faults, which were those of most beginners. The young man was exuberant in gesture, turbulent in gaiety; his voice went to his head without his perceiving it, and escaped in the shrillest of shrill notes. In vain Régnier pointed out this and that; he could not succeed in checking this tendency to intemperance. Then he bethought him of a very curious stratagem, wherein comes out the genius of the professor.

Taking his pupil aside, he told him that he unhesitatingly considered him best fitted for important *financier* parts, and promised him great success in that line if he would unreservedly devote himself to it. Coquelin did not jump at the proposal. *Financier* parts are not very brilliant or seductive in a young man's notion; to "make up" old, muffle your voice, moderate your gestures, peer through half-shut eyes, have your nose pulled, these are not the sort of things a man resigns himself

to easily, when he is not yet twenty. But the master had spoken, there was nothing for it but to swallow the pill. So behold friend Coquelin, for three months running, fagging at "heavy old men," studying the discreet demeanour, the ponderous gait, the faltering and weak voice of the Gérontes of the classic repertory. He was not, to tell the truth, altogether dissatisfied with himself. Régnier, too, encouraged him with compliments and applause.

One day Mademoiselle Delahaye, a frisky "chambermaid" of the Odéon company, who, afterwards, went to St. Petersburg, arranged a benefit performance at the *École Lyrique.* She meditated playing Dorine in *Tartuffe,* and was looking about for an Orgon. She asked to be supplied with one from the Conservatoire classes and was directed to young Coquelin. It was a good opportunity for the pupil to put his progress to public proof. He accepted with delight.

The patrons of the *École Lyrique* in the Rue de la Tour-d'Auvergne, formed an altogether peculiar public, much given to banter and adhering to the traditions of playful "chaff" dear to the pit in by-gone days. They at once made a dead set at the poor youth who had donned Orgon's wig, and enlivened the performance with jokes that did not strike the young beginner as funny. It will be remembered that in the second act, Orgon, in a rage with Dorine, makes his exit exclaiming :

> Ses discours insolents m'ont mis l'esprit en feu
> Et je vais prendre l'air pour me rasseoir un peu.

"Just so, old chap," cried a mocking voice from the floor of the house; "*va prendre l'air,* go, get a little fresh air, and don't come back again."

You can easily imagine the disgust of a pupil of the Conservatoire on becoming a butt for brick-bats like this. Coquelin rushed off to his master, and told him he would have nothing more to do with *financiers,* that sooner than go on with them, he would give up the stage.

"You are tired of the Orgon line," said Régnier to him quietly, "Very well! never mind! take to the valets again, I make no objection."

Coquelin, then, returns to the Scapin of *Les Fourberies.* He rehearses the part. Good gracious, what a change! It seemed as though his voice

had of its own accord got back to his chest; that his gestures had become more measured, his port more ample. His comrades were all astounded. A smile of satisfaction at the result of his artfulness played on Régnier's machiavelian lips.

At the annual competition Coquelin played Crispin in *Les Folies Amoureuses*. An accident befell him that is by no means rare on these occasions. He was so nervous that he got put out, and by no means shone in the scene of his own choosing. But on the same day, he had to give the cue to half a dozen of his comrades, and in these scenes, in which he felt more at his ease, being relieved of personal responsibility, he was excellent, and deeply impressed the judges. It was proposed to award him the first prize; but the rules prescribe that, once a pupil has carried off the first prize, he must quit the Conservatoire, and M. Régnier held that Coquelin was still in need of another year's study.

"But, my dear master," said Coquelin, who does not count patience among his chief virtues, "I shall be your pupil all the same, if I do go over to the Comédie-Française; I can come out in public, while still continuing to receive lessons from you."

He was granted only a second prize, which he shared with Laroche, who also is an actual member of the House of Molière.

It was on the 7th of December, 1860, that Coquelin made his first appearance as Mascarille in *Le Dépit amoureux*. From this he went on to the part of Petit-Jean in *Les Plaideurs*, and to that of Sylvestre in *Les Fourberies de Scapin*.

M. Thierry, the manager of the Comédie-Française, was not in the habit of making much fuss about the young people he brought out on the stage for the first time. He did not invite the Press to see them, and although I was one of the most faithful devotees of the Comédie, of these three first appearances I witnessed only the last.

It is not without a certain pleasure that I have turned up, among my Monday articles, the expression, all hot as it was written, of my surprise and admiration. I hardly knew old Monrose except by name, but I had so often heard him talked of by my father and other old



frequenters of the Théâtre-Français, that I had formed a tolerably exact idea of him. I fancied I detected in the new comer some of the qualities that had made the reputation of the great comic actor.

"This young man," I wrote on the morrow of his last success, "is one of the most brilliant hopes of the Comédie. A turned up nose an impudent glance, singularly expressive and mobile features, an admirable voice, powerful in the lower register, thrilling and of good *timbre,* youthful ardour, a very keen intelligence and a passionate love for his art, there you have Coquelin."

His name was as yet known only to a few regular frequenters of the house. It was not long in coming into notoriety. Coquelin was allowed to try his hand in Figaro, not the Figaro of *Le Barbier de Séville,* but the one of *La Folle Journée,* the Figaro of the monologue, Figaro the great.

What! A youngster, still a mere novice, in such a terrible part! What could the manager have been thinking about? This is what had happened.

In some piece or other that was on the point of being brought out at the Comédie, Coquelin had been cast for a part which, although in the second rank, was none the less a flattering one for the artist. At that time the younger Provost had just joined the Comédie-Française and his father, the famous old Provost, was doing his utmost to push him on. He went off to the author and asked for the part originally destined for Coquelin. The author could hardly refuse this favour to old Provost upon whose aid he reckoned for the success of his piece. You can fancy the chagrin of the young *pensionnaire* on being thus ousted. Straightway he went to his manager and gave vent to bitter complaints. M. Thierry was, as Molière puts it, *un homme doux et consolatif,* a man full of gentleness and consolation; he overwhelmed Coquelin with kind words and promised to make it up to him by letting him choose whatever part he liked in the classic repertory.

"The *Mariage de Figaro* for me, then!" cried Coquelin.

M. Thierry pulled a long face, indicated one or two serious points of objection, but it was too late. He had sworn by the Styx!

Coquelin, with the superb self-confidence of youth, staked his all

upon a single card; a check would have thrown him back three or four years. All went well until the moment came for his going on the stage; then a dreadful fear laid hold of him; his limbs were all of a tremble, his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and he got through the three first acts hardly knowing what he was saying, his eye dim, his countenance sad, his voice choked, like a man on his way to the scaffold.

"Laugh, you beggar, will you," said Mademoiselle Augustine Brohan, "you are Figaro!"

And with a gesture of despair Coquelin made signs that he could not laugh. Happily the Parisian public is lavish of its indulgence towards beginners. They waited patiently. Then came the fifth act; it is the act that contains the soliloquy, the greatest of all soliloquies, the legendary, the classic soliloquy.

It was then the fashion, you may remember, to give a tragic turn, whenever possible, to the comic characters of the classic repertory, especially to those of Molière. It was old Provost who, in making Arnolphe, in *L'École des Femmes,* a serious and sympathetic personage, had been the first to set the example of these metamorphoses. To my mind, this was to misunderstand and misrepresent the real character of the classic drama. But the notion had been successful by its very novelty and boldness. Coquelin too, then, had his own ideas about altering the reading of the soliloquy. He aimed at giving it a sombre touch, a touch of bitterness, of irritation. The inward emotion that was agitating him deepened the tones of his naturally vibrating voice, and imparted to his face and gesture an additionally fierce and desolate air. His success was tremendous, the next day all the newspapers were ringing with his praises: here was a man who would prove a worthy successor to actors like Monrose, Samson, Régnier and Got; who like them would be at once Scapin, Crispin and Figaro. No one was better cut out for playing those magnificent and intrepid rascals of the classic repertory, so noisy in their gaiety, so strikingly fantastic, so superbly extravagant, importing, as it were, an epic quality into their buffoonery. In these parts, Coquelin may be said to be incomparable. I prefer him in them to Got, and even to his master, Régnier. Not having seen Monrose I cannot speak

of him. But good judges have assured me that there was much that was factitious in the method of that excellent comedian, and that his animation shewed a little too much deliberate preparation.

There is nothing of that in Coquelin's style. Eye, nose and voice, voice especially, are his most puissant means of action. He delivers long speeches all in one breath, with the whole force of his chest, not bothering himself much about the finer shades, but dealing with the thing by wholesale, and he lays all the stronger hold on the public, who get a large and lively general impression of the whole. Phrases that have to be emphasised, to stand out from the rest, gleam, by this method of delivery, with all the sharp metallic brightness of a new *louis,* fresh from the mint. Mascarille in *Les Précieuses Ridicules,* Crispin in *Le Légataire Universel,* Scapin in *Les Fourberies de Scapin,* Figaro in *Le Barbier de Séville* and *Le Mariage de Figaro,* Mascarille in *L'Étourdi* have never found a more stalwart and joyous exponent.

Do you remember the long speech in *L'Étourdi?* It contains two hundred lines at least, a good half of which are next to unintelligible. It used to be a tradition at the Comédie-Française for the actor, in certain of the clearer and more animated passages, that of the quarrel between the two women, for instance, to make a pause and to emphasise each humorous stroke one by one. All the rest was allowed to go as it might; people listened to it out of respect for Molière. Coquelin, thanks to the indomitable organ with which he is gifted, discovered the trick of throwing off this vast narration in one lump, a sort of huge water-spout of alexandrines, pouring down on the astounded public. The laughter-provoking effect was irresistible; people understood no better than before, but laughed much more heartily. There is only one passage that can be compared with this : the famous description of the hunt delivered by Coquelin in *Les Fâcheux.* You seem to be listening to a trumpeter, his horse running away with him at full gallop, in the rear of a yelping pack, and sounding the *hallali* with the full force of his lungs.

It is the antique repertory that has furnished Coquelin with his best creations. There is not a part in his own line, among those of our old classic drama, in which he has not been excellent; in some he has

proved exquisite. He may be said to have brought their charm to life again for us, to have made a revelation of them. Who suspected, before him, that Monsieur Loyal, the sheriff's officer in Tartuffe, could be made to have so much individual character? You would have readily reckoned him a mere super. This super Coquelin has turned into an important personage. Nothing could be more comic than his smirking airs, his mawkish, honeyed speech, that suddenly turns sour, when he ceases to be treated with respect : he is the psalm-singing bum-bailiff, the ideal man for the dirty work of Tartuffe.

Read, in *Les Fâcheux,* the scene of the little *coranto,* the one in which Lysandre offers to sing and dance to the marquis a little thing of his own composing; the text is a mere trifle, hardly more than a few lines. Coquelin turned it into a delicious scene, singing, dancing, mimicking and playing delightfully.

And Dubois in *Le Misanthrope,* and Pierrot in *Don Juan,* and Lucas in *Le Médecin malgré lui,* and Maître Jacques in *L'Avare,* and Crispin in *Crispin rival de son Maître,* and Pasquin in *Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard,* and the Marquis in *La Critique de l'École des Femmes,* and Trissotin and Vadius! No doubt I forget some names, for there is hardly a part in the line of valets or of low comedy in which Coquelin has not tried his hand, and upon which he has not set his mark. In this class, he stands first and worthy of being ranked by the side of the most illustrious comedians recorded in the history of the stage.

But however rich the classic repertory may be, it is a quite natural ambition in an artist to contribute to the fortunes of the art of his own day, to freshen up his own reputation at more modern springs.

Coquelin first turned towards the parts that Régnier had created in the modern repertory, and took possession of them by right of inheritance. Thus we saw him by turns as Destournelles in *Mademoiselle de la Seiglière,* as Colombet in *Le Mari à la Campagne,* as Balandard in *Une Chaîne,* as Oscar in *Le Mari qui trompe sa Femme,* as Julien in *Gabrielle.* I do not think that in any one of these parts he has obliterated the recollection of his master, with those fortunate enough to have seen the latter. He is more turbulent, perhaps, and more joyous, but with less



Cliche Chalot

COQUELIN'S DRESSING ROOM

AT THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE

variety and less delicacy. Régnier, who had not the same natural gifts, dug deeper down into his parts, and his method was not only more varied, but full of more subtly distinguished shades. The process of rough-and-ready, wholesale gaiety in delivery, which harmonises so well with the broad humour of Molière and the good humour of Regnard, fits in less happily with the thinner wit of Scribe and his successors. Thus Coquelin was not hailed with unreserved praise in these new attempts of his. But the criticisms expressed were of the sort inevitable with men of my own age, who are the victims of importunate memories, and cannot help establishing unprofitable comparisons. The public, for its part, apparently takes no account of criticisms like these; it gives itself up entirely, without any after-thought, to the pleasure of hearing that sonorous voice and of enjoying that exuberant animation.

Nowadays dramatic artists have far fewer chances than their predecessors of distinguishing themselves by new creations. In the time when Régnier laid the foundation of his vast renown, the Comédie-Française was in the habit of mounting a dozen novelties or more every year. Now they hardly offer us as many as one or two pieces in a winter. The actor who is not in the cast has a couple of years to wait before he can again give his proofs before the public.

Until recent years Coquelin had had only rare opportunities of creating parts. Among those that, in the first stage of his career, contributed to bring him into notoriety, there are three which it is worth while considering more particularly. The first is Gringoire, Théodore de Banville's Gringoire, a poor devil of a poet, whose sad and sympathetic personality he built up with a curiously happy originality. The piece contained a very pretty ballad, the last couplet of which Coquelin delivered with a voice like the blast of a trumpet. The thing was a charming bit of calculated audacity.

But still Gringoire was not a modern part. The two others belonged to the actual world of to-day. One was the part of Adolphe de Beaubourg in *Paul Forestier* by Émile Augier, the other that of the Duke de Septmonts in Dumas' *Étrangère*.

In *Paul Forestier* Coquelin may be said to have been the man who

held the fate of the piece in his hand, and who saved it. He was handicapped with a very ungrateful part and a terribly unsavoury speech. Had he exaggerated the character, turned it to caricature, the comedy would have been lost. But this man of daring experiments shewed himself able here to observe consummate tact and moderation, while at the same time letting the ridiculous side of the absurd person he was impersonating be plainly seen.

Still more did he astonish his admirers in the Duke de Septmonts. In the author's mind this part had been destined for M. Bressant. But if M. Bressant had played it, I doubt whether *L'Étrangère* would have obtained the same success. It was an advantage for the character to be represented by an artist with a less seductive presence and less engaging manners. On the other hand it was excusable to fear lest Coquelin should be overmindful of his still being a valet of old comedy. But no; he displayed as much dignity and graciousness as was needed to atone for the odious element in the part; he was polished, haughty and incisive; and recalled—and no finer praise can be offered him—the style of Samson in *Le Marquis de la Seiglière* and *Les Effrontés*. This creation marked the apogee of Coquelin's reputation at the Comédie-Française. He wanted to play everything, and felt himself able to impose anything on a public that adored him, that reserved a special place for him in its admiration.

Since nature had specially created him to play valets, his ambition was to be loved and to draw tears. Yes, Coquelin, the incomparable Scapin, the ideal Figaro, was tormented by a fierce desire to see, at his coming to the footlights, not all mouths opening in hearty laughter, but all eyes becoming dim with gentle tears. Tabarin is one of his parts for which he has always had a peculiar weakness; so is the violin-maker of Cremona. Neither his voice nor his face, alas, lends itself easily to this transformation. It is a very difficult thing at the play to be moved by the woes of a man whose nose is puckered up and twitches in so amusing a fashion. In vain the actor sends his voice through this comic nose; it does not become much the more touching for that. Not that he has not displayed in some of these parts a profound sensibility and dramatic

qualities of the first order; but, after all said and done, in this region he has equals, if not superiors. He had played M. Octave Feuillet's *Chamillac* wonderfully well; the part of Chamillac was subsequently undertaken by Worms, and Worms was quite as good in it, perhaps more impressive still, for the reason that the part was one in his own line, that he had the voice and face proper to it.

In the same way Coquelin cast longing looks on the parts of young lovers, of *jeunes premiers;* he appropriated them to himself in virtue of the right invoked by the lion of the fable, *quia nominor leo.* It was thus that he laid hands on the part of Brichanteau in Gondinet's *Un Parisien,* and very cleverly did he sketch out the character; but a second-rate actor assumed the part after him, and was not perceptibly inferior.

Again he put forward pretensions to attempting "heavy leads," to playing *Le Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe;* a desire he realised in the provinces; but in Paris he had found obstacles to his many-sided ambition. Sieyès said of Napoleon, at the time he was still only First Consul : "He knows how to do everything, is able to do everything, and wants to do everything." It would be a fit motto for Coquelin. But it is just as well to admit that there will always be some things that he will do better than others, being born to do them. Thus among all the characters that he assumed one after another, those in which he won the most sincere applause, in which we overwhelmed him with unreserved praise were Don Annibal in *L'Aventurière,* Don César de Bazan in *Ruy Blas,* or if you like, Thouvenin in *Denyse.* He preferred himself in Florence in *Les Rantzau* or in Chamillac. But that was not, nor do I believe it ever will be, the opinion of the public.

The theatre did not suffice for his indefatigable and devouring activity. He has acquired a great reputation by the brilliant fashion in which he recites poems at concerts or receptions. We must do him this justice : he has often used his authority to compel the attention of the philistines to various young poets whose talent he has revealed or to whose renown he has contributed. Alphonse Daudet owes him much, so do Maxime Bouchor, and Lenormand, and some others. Now and then he has been deceived in his choice; but who has not?

Perhaps there was a moment when he scattered and squandered himself a little too freely. He was always over the hills and far away; he performed his fair share of work at the Comédie all the same, for he is one of those who are always ready; a robust and solid artist, his brazen voice is of unchangeable metal, and it remains always vigorous in a throat nothing affects. We could have wished, we Parisians, whose spoiled child he was, that he might devote to ourselves the best of his strength, but the whim for wandering has seized him. He was entitled to retire, having completed his twenty years as a *sociétaire,* required by the regulations. He has commuted his retiring pension and resumed his liberty. He is arranging to leave for the New World, that goes with us by the name of the land of dollars. We hope he will win many of them, and many bravos too, and that, when his harvest is reaped, he will come back to us.

He has not, however, severed the last tie that binds him to the Comédie-Française; he has not withdrawn his *fonds sociaux;* he can then resume, if he pleases, his place among his old comrades. We will kill the fatted calf to celebrate the return of the prodigal son.

FRANCISQUE SARCEY.





SOME NOTES ON THE PARIS SALON



Monsieur Zola, who has always the courage of his opinions, once headed his remarks on the Salon with the significant title : "My Aversions." I cannot, for my part, take up so decisive a tone in discussing the exhibition of 1888. On the contrary, I am prepared to pledge myself to speak without fear, but without prejudice. Not that I have not my preferences, as much as any one else, my ideal, and even my aversions; but to judge fairly of works of art, some little eclecticism and open-mindedness must be brought to the task. We must put ourselves in the artist's place, think his thoughts, dream his dreams, and then say if indeed the thoughts are commonplace, and the dreams stale; then we may dismiss those that deserve it to the Philistine limbo whence

they should never have emerged, but never be prejudiced by the first impression, nor insist from the first on unanimity of opinions. The most exclusive tastes like the most dissimilar things : M. de Goncourt, likes a Japanese Kakemono or a picture by Pater. At the same time, I do not see why he should contemn M. Cazin for preferring M. Luc-Olivier Merson, or why one may not equally appreciate the rich, luscious colouring of M. Vollon, and the poetical monochrome of M. Puvis de Chavannes.

So, for these reasons, and because I always think it cruel to condemn, with a stroke of the pen, a work of art which it has cost long patience to produce, I will not give my comments the lofty title assumed by M. Zola. I would rather call them with greater modesty : "My scruples." Besides, I never could see the least occasion for getting into a rage, or indulging in any great raptures over an annual exhibition. I hear people say : "Art is going to the dogs," or "Art is reviving" à propos to the works in the Salon. But the Salon is not so sure an indication of the condition of art.

Some people always think that on going into the Salon, they will see French art as a whole. At most they do but feel its pulse. These exhibitions are, one with another, a chance selection. Some of our best artists are always absent, or poorly represented, and thus some of the best work of the year escapes notice. This year, for instance, Puvis de Chavannes, Gustave Moreau, Merson, Ribot are missing. The followers of the absent masters often do them slender justice. This is especially the case with M. Puvis de Chavannes. He has a host of imitators, who have his taste for soft and pale tone, for wide space and poetical landscapes; but then they fancy themselves obliged to imitate his rudimentary drawing. "*Imitatores servum pecus*——"

They forget that M. Puvis de Chavannes does draw when he chooses; it is not that he cannot, but that he will not. Thus M. Pierre Lagarde, who has a true poetic vein, and whose landscapes are full of air, gives us men and horses of wood. This is not like his master's deliberate neglect.

Again, I observe that French art is not unmixed in the Salon. In point of fact I find that foreigners exhibit to the number of one in four of the painters, and one in nine of the sculptors. A number of these

foreigners have studied, to be sure, in French studios; and this does us credit, for it must be confessed that the best artistic training is to be had in France. We thus disseminate the influence of our painters and sculptors in countries which had not previously cultivated the fine arts, or which had lost the traditions of their national schools. The circle of this influence grows wider year by year. Not only do Englishmen, Germans, Italians, and Spaniards avail themselves of our annual exhibitions, but many Russians, Greeks, South-Americans, and Australians; there is even a Japanese exhibitor this year, M. Gazoo Fouji. I give his name, for the fact is a curious one.

Many of these foreigners are hardly to be distinguished from French painters; their tendencies are identical. We have Swedes painting the banks of the Marne, and the Japanese painter's work has the very Parisian title of *Le Pantalon déchiré*—"The torn trousers." Still, the more recent foreign schools hold their own with much power; it is impossible to overlook the steady progress of the English and American schools, or of the new Dutch school : the English send us depressing, but fine and conscientious portraits by Mr. Orchardson and Mr. Herkomer. Mr. Herkomer's picture shows us, I believe, the features of his father, whose influence has been so great on the progress of *genre* painting in and out of England. I can never forget his fine work, so much admired at the Great Paris Exhibition of 1878, "The Last Muster." This picture, which was remarkable for the treatment of broad light, the truthfulness of the heads and an emotional pathos peculiarly English, marked out a road for English *genre* which we still see it following.

In this year's Salon, we find several of these studies of interiors illuminated by a broad white light, pouring in through the wide windows characteristic of northern buildings. Here is Mr. Walter Gay's picture : *Un Asile de Vieillards*—"An alms-house," a large room with wide windows curtained with white, full of pale daylight playing on the wrinkled old faces. Here again is *l'Histoire de revenants*—"A ghost story" by Mr. Mac-Ewen : a party of women sewing under a large window and all agitated by the ghost story which one of them is telling. And there are others.

This vein of English painting finds its progenitor in the old school of Dutch and Flemish interiors, and to this day its nearest parallel is to be sought in Holland and Belgium. A breath of renascence seems to be stirring in these lands, once so famous in art. The painters have turned their backs on the theatrical presentments of history of the school of Wauters and Gallait, and on the insipid refinement of M. Willems. A reaction towards the remoter past has given rise to a school of which the most noteworthy representative is M. Jozef Israëls. As we look at his solemnly luminous pictures, full of a deep and living sense of nature, and transparent even in the shadows, we irresistibly utter the name of Rembrandt; and the mere suggestion of such a comparison is the highest praise a painter can hope for. M. Israëls' fellow-countrymen are indifferent to this grave master; they prefer the jolly Dutchmen of whom Jan Steen is the prototype. There is goodly show of pleasing pictures, full of light, with white draperies, and elderly faces: for instance M. Tytgadt's *Béguinage*—"Convent workroom," a very bright and attractive work, which would, however, have been better for a rather firmer handling. And I pause to note a very capital painter who illustrates the connection I have mentioned between the living English and Dutch schools, for he is an American, and he lives in Holland—Mr. Melchers. He has painted a party of sunburnt sailors in the crude daylight of a large window, and the haze of smoke from their pipes. Through the window, beyond the tiled roofs, the sea is visible in the distance. There is an atmosphere of peace, cleanliness and prosperity—the atmosphere of a Dutch town. This is one of the best pictures of the year. If to these names, I add those of certain powerful Flemish painters of sea-pieces, M. Mesdag and M. Mols; of some few Norwegians, M. Normann and M. Hagborg, I have said all I have to say—not indeed about foreign schools of art—but about foreign pictures in this year's Salon. Spain, which used to send us so many pictures, is represented only by M. Melida's pretty trees and engaging little persons smartly set up against a bit of blue sky. From Italy, Russia, and Germany we have little or nothing.

In judging of the Salon each year, we are apt to take too little account of this foreign incursion. It enhances the general medley of these



miscellaneous collections, where, in spite of M. Turquet, it is impossible even to dream of anything like a grouping founded on sympathy.

There is yet another thing which prevents a Salon from being representative of art at any given date, and that is that all artists do not care for art alone. This is inherent in the very nature of such exhibitions. The first point is to attract attention; the best artists endeavour to gain that of true connoisseurs, and seek to do so by legitimate means, but the greater number aim at catching the eye of the public, and know that they must take other means of doing it. Hence the literature and taste of the day have an undue share in the productions of art; and too many painters trust to the oddity or novelty of their subjects, rather than to the resources of their skill. And it is impossible to walk through the Salon without finding something to say about the choice of subjects, though that has little enough to do with art.

The choice of subjects varies with the taste of the public. *Genre* painting, which, following the lead of M. Meissonier, used to delight in depicting the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, seems to have given them up. We hardly ever see the costumes of Henri II, or Louis XIV, or the imitations of Terburg and Gerard Dow, which were once so common. *Genre* has put on a modern garb, and it is well. At the best periods of Dutch and Flemish painting it was essentially modern; and we now find simple and gleeful scenes of French country-life, such as M. Perret's *Cinquantaine*—"Fifty to day," in which the heads are perfect, and nothing is wanting but a little more care in the landscape.

In these days too, painters who travel have the opportunity of studying pleasing costumes, and we have M. Dagnan-Bouveret's *Bernoise* and *Breton*. He is a painter who never becomes trivial. No one else paints flesh with such matchless delicacy, in tones which remind us of Clouet. His studies this year, though less important than some former works, show a marked advance in his exquisite style of treatment. There is one mistake into which M. Dagnan has slipped, but which, as I believe, he will avoid for the future; it is one that is common to many of his brethren. *Genre* painting should be content with a small scale, and is rarely improved by increased dimensions. This is a fault I must

find with M. Pelez, whose huge picture claims attention, no undeservedly. His *Grimaces et Misère*—"Mimicry and Misery," is a canvas vast beyond reason. In it he has displayed all that can be conceived of as most hideous : squalid poverty, hapless infancy, brutality and drunkenness. But the painters who, of old, were fain to satirise the vices and folly of their day, Jan Steen, and Hogarth, restricted themselves to more reasonable canvases. Repulsive or ridiculous objects gain nothing by such large proportions. So I am not ill-pleased to see that the middle ages, and the centuries immediately succeeding them are retiring to the domain of decorative painting, and the style, which it was long the fashion to designate as "History," while modern subjects are confined to works of smaller proportions, such as the world recognizes under the name of *Genre*.

With some exceptions—and to which of these remarks are there not exceptions? I am of opinion that the painting which depends on observation and character, *Genre* in fact, is suited to modern subjects, and to a small scale. And this applies also to military subjects. It seems to me that, in spite of powerful and robust treatment, M. Moreau de Tours, in his enormous *Assaut de Malakoff,* a scene from the Crimean War, appeals no more strongly to our feelings, than he would have done with a canvas two feet square. A small picture is better adapted than a large one, to the expression of a tender or a striking idea. It can affect us as deeply as a great decorative work, just as there may be as much feeling in chamber-music as in the playing of an orchestra; and when I see mere size forced upon a subject to which it is not suited, I have the same sense of disproportion as when I hear certain pianoforte pieces by Schumann expanded into orchestral fantasias.

I do not think that our faces, costumes, and manners are as yet in historical perspective. We are lost in great pictures, as we are lost in tragedies; and it is not that we lack size, but that we lack remoteness. For epic greatness, we must have retired into the dim distance of departed ages. I am quite aware, as I write this, that I am in collision with a large school of painters, backed up by a whole regiment of critics. I should notwithstanding adhere to my opinion, but that I am met by a certain number of very good pictures conceived in a spirit diametrically

T. CHARTRAN



VINCENT DE BEAUVAIS ET LOUIS IX À L'ABBAYE DE ROYAUMONT

SALON DE 1868

opposed to it. Talent is justified in over-riding every principle; none is inviolable. For instance, here we have M. Lerolle with a very large and impressive work, in which the modern costume does not destroy all dignity, though in truth it does somewhat detract from it. This again is an interior, a church. This painter revels in the broad, white expanses and the old church architecture of the last century. The diffused daylight allows of his drowning the figures in a clear, luminous silveriness, and he likes to indulge in a play of reflected lights, sunbeams, and shadows, which gives the spectator a sense of the radiant atmosphere that fills those lofty naves. When once we have got over a certain chilliness, and some regret as we remember the beautiful trees and airy landscapes in which M. Lerolle used to delight, we are captivated and touched by the remarkable qualities of this broad and solidly painted picture. At the same time, I cannot help wondering whether a few years hence this noble painting will not appear out of date, in consequence of the absurdities of modern fashion—especially those appendages by which women distort the proportions bestowed on them by nature, and which most effectually falsify their structure and shape. However, I will not carp at a *bustle,* and I am happy to pay well deserved honour to M. Lerolle's manly individuality and mastery.

M. Roll again belies me, and I am glad to be belied. I have long known M. Roll's merits : a thoroughly genuine and abundant artistic inspiration, and a comprehension of nature and fresh air, which few painters possess in an equally high degree; but I had never till now seen any outcome of these gifts which entirely satisfy me. Before he thus routed my theories, M. Roll had done much to confirm them; still I never believed that so much talent and skill could end in nothing but methodical and tiresome pictures, nor that the lucid sunshine, the keen and breatheable atmosphere of which M. Roll gives so true an impression could illuminate nothing but old bricks, great coats, and chimney-pot hats. Now M. Roll has reached the point where he should long since have been, and paints a landscape with accessory figures. His mode of viewing nature has still a taint of the plebian, the envious might say of vulgarity; but how full of air, of life, of and light. This peasant girl in her

petticoat and bodice, who has just come from milking is flooded with them. The air is hot, the life is young, the light is tremulous and dazzling. Everything is soaked with it, drowned in it. It is the spring-time of life fervidly felt.

And the boy on a horse, galloping through the dewy shrubs which come up to the girths of his restive pony, what vigour and action! What brilliant and gladsome handling. Henceforth I fancy M. Roll is inhibited from painting anything like twaddle.

Though, after all, M. Roll is not such a contradiction to my theory as he would seem to be; far be it from me to think of deterring painters from peopling their landscapes, however huge, with figures. The men and women sprung from the soil are a part and parcel of nature. They, like nature, are dignified and poetical; and even when old, and bent double, they have something of the grand lines of Mother Earth. Nature is always beautiful; it is civilization which disfigures it. Nor are the lands which force their beauty most upon our gaze, those best fitted to inspire the painter. We will have nothing to say to Switzerland, and its mountains; their image, as fixed by art, is always inadequate and mean. Take rather the native soil of the flat country round about Paris, and you will find knots of labourers lurking among the golden corn, pausing from their toil, such as M. Lhermitte paints in his calm solid manner, with broad, unerring drawing : a man seated on a sheaf, the sweat streaming down his face, as he eats his midday meal. A woman cast in the stalwart mould of a peasant matron, her bosom bare to the sunshine, as she nurses a hearty baby, and looks down on it with pride. Here we have the health and peace of nature itself.

Go yet a little further, linger in the damp sandy, desolate plain which stretches along the north sea, the *dunes* between Boulogne and Calais. Those fogs and sandhills, are the home of a poet and masterly painter, M. Cazin. I know that poverty-stricken land, that level barren plain, yellow and patched with colour by a scanty vegetation; in the distance a few red-roofed houses, in the foreground a pool of stagnant water. It is the close of a day of toil. A woman is come to fetch home a man who looks up, one hand outstretched, and holding the barrow he has



L'HEURE DE LA TRAITE

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been wheeling. With the other he lifts the woman's skirt which she has turned up over her head—for the evening is sharp—revealing the ever charming picture of a child asleep on its mother's breast. The sentiment is all the truer for not being pointed by the gesture or expression of the figures; it lies in the scene itself, and in the poetic glamour thrown over everything by the clear tones of twilight. We see the joys and grave dignity of humble life, its peace and its love.

And our great painter, Jules Breton, do you think I have forgotten him? My only difficulty is that I can find so little to say about that noble seer of the beauty of nature in France. He, like the masters of the golden ages, is the head of a family of artists, each a painter of mark: Émile Breton, his brother, with his beautiful and solemn night-pieces, his sober and solid marine scenery; Madame Demont-Breton, whose motherly heart reveals itself in representing the innocent grace of childhood, and whose vigorous and manly touch grows tender to paint its rosy limbs; M. Adrien Demont, one of our best landscape painters, who gives us this year two exquisite pictures: *l'Hiver en Flandre*—"Winter in Flanders," a snow scene, broken by a huge bonfire burning outside the walls of an old town, and *les Œillettes*—"A field of poppies," a soothing twilight view of a flowery plain all white and rose colour. What room have I then to speak of the Master himself? Of his powerful peasant girl, carrying a burthen on her head, and walking so upright, while evening steals down on the blossoming meadows; and of this poetical work, into which the venerable master has put his very soul, *Jeunes Filles se rendant à la Procession*—"Girls going to join a procession." What truth, and what idealism! The white lights of the girls' dresses flutter like wings, and through the silvery veil of the distant hills, the fragrant mist from the valleys goes up as incense to heaven. It is a great charm in M. Breton's pictures that some happy verses of his own poetry can almost always be found to suit them. But this time I have sought in vain. I can find nothing. I cannot let him off. He is in our debt a poem (*).

(*) A complete edition of M. Jules Breton's poems, *les Champs et la Mer* (Fields and seapieces) and his longer poem *Jeanne*, has lately been published by Lemerre (Paris 1887). No lover of art should fail to read them.

Here are indeed a number of exceptions, which have led me far away from the theory I was trying to lay down. But I am glad. Theories and principles are frontier lines within which, in writing, we are bound to restrict our notions. Genius may cross these frontiers; its rights are indefeasible. Indeed I cannot too often repeat that I do not pretend to dogmatise, that in fact it would be out of place. If, for instance—to return to *genre* painting, from which we started—if I were to say that this class of painting, as it has been developed within our own day by Meissonier and Gérôme, is now in a very bad way, I should have again to admit many exceptions. That we are tired of preciousness of finish and minute detail is beyond a doubt; their most extravagant adherents are M. Firmin Girard, who frets the eye by his countless brush-strokes, and M. Robinet, who never omits a pebble, and works up a landscape by the methods of miniature-painting.

M. Gérôme, whose crisp, dry modelling is eminently suited to small subjects and humourous scenes, seems to me to have been led by his fertile imagination into a realm of poetry where he is not quite as his ease. The female forms he sees in a vision rising from the sea foam, are too dimpled, too sheeny, too definite for the fancy even of a poet to have seen them thus among the vague surges of the surf. They are bewitching women, but not sea-nymphs. Nevertheless the female figures are well drawn, the reclining poet is boldly and subtly posed—and M. Gérôme is a master.

He has indeed many disciples; now that M. Meissonier to some extent abides in his tent, he remains the leader of the fast diminishing tribe of minute and refined painters. Many of its chiefs do not exhibit this year, and it is, in fact, shrinking by degrees to a handful of painters of horses and hunting scenes, and some painters of military subjects. Among the former I may mention M. Goubie; he stands unshaken by the movement which is carrying away some of his brethren, among others M. Lewis-Brown, to adopt the freer and perhaps less laborious methods of open air work. He is faithful to the precision and crispness he has inherited from his master, M. Gérôme. He fills a place by himself as a painter of horses. No one certainly knows or understands, or

J. R. GOUBIE



PARTIE DE CAMPAGNE

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renders with more skill, the structure, action and physionomy of the most artistic of quadrupeds. This is no small merit; and I may add that if M. Goubie would but vary his subjects, it would be seen that he knows other animals as well as he knows the horse. It rests with himself to take a very high rank as an animal painter.

Among military painters I will not stop to look at M. Le Blant, who has often done better than this year, and from whom I expect greater things. I do not overlook M. Boutigny, who has a picture full of his unfailing power, and dramatic feeling: *Le lendemain de Champigny*—"The day after the Battle of Champigny."

The merits of M. Édouard Detaille are beyond question; he has recorded the aspect, the types, and the physionomy of the French army during the last fifteen years with unerring fidelity. The criticism which I cannot forbear from expressing is quite apart from these fundamental qualities. It is the eve of a battle; all along a tragical hedge of piled muskets, with crossed bayonets cutting a gloomy sky, soldiers wrapped in their blankets, worn out and weary, are lying on the bare earth in the various attitudes in which sleep has overtaken them. What is going on in the sharp night air? A sense of the sudden awakening which will come to these men, and fling them into the fight. A perplexed vision of yesterday's battle and of to-morrow's battle broods over the silent and motionless scene. Is not this dream of combat present to every mind at the first glance? What need then of that phantasmagoria in the clouds—soldiers, standards, bugles? We should see them, even if they were not in the picture. A work of art should always leave something to the mind of the spectator. Could we not have divined the dream of these sleeping warriors without having it set before us? However, as it is, the picture is a fine one, and I have no wish to run down its merits.

Before quitting the pictures of *genre* I must devote a moment to the painters of still life, to Desgoffes, and Delannoy, who display the sheeny lights of silks, the iridescence of gems, the glitter of metal and of ancient weapons; to the appetising painters of food, Zackarian and others, who appeal to our greediness through our eyes; to the painters of flowers

which we can smell, among whom I am pleased to note Madame Fauré, who inherits from her father, the great Fremiet, a very individual and manly grasp of nature. It is no less than their due, for it is among this class, perhaps, that we find the truest colourists, and, if I may say so, the most essentially painters among painters. I do not overlook them, for I include them all in my admiration for the greatest of their school, M. Vollon, though he has deserted them these two years, and joined the landscape painters.

I have got to M. Vollon, and I will not let him slip, for I am about to confess to you my secret preference. If a benevolent Genius were to give me my choice among all the pictures in the Salon, I should ask for M. Vollon's *Cour de Ferme*—"Farm-yard." Others no doubt might tempt me, but I think I should always come back to M. Vollon, prefering perhaps to delight my eyes rather than my soul, for these great splashes of colour—the thatched roof, the stormy sky, the decrepit walls, the poultry against the golden tints of a farm-yard midden, taken out of the body of paint with a twirl of the brush—all this is a joy to behold. What M. Vollon chooses to paint matters not to me; it may be his immortal copper pot, or this dung-hill and this thatch; I revel greedily in the unctuous lavishness of his colour; it is a boon to the sight, his work is that of a master hand.

I heard, as I gazed at it, the complaints of some young devotees of the open-air school, who could not see nature in it: "It is too much cooked," said they. But I like this cookery, and feast upon it. I do not think that many painters since Franz Hals have used the brush in such style.

One thing which is quite delicious and which one feels in looking at this picture, cannot be put into words. It is peculiar to painting, and only painting can express it. When I have said that the picture is unctuous and hot, I have only spoken in metaphor. I still can but say, Go and see it. It is the only praise I can give it—the highest possible praise perhaps of a picture.

After having seen this work I felt ready to say to all painters: Do likewise or else take up decorative painting. Give us this cookery, this

golden glow, or else try to find great ideas and illustrate them on large spaces with the wide expansiveness and happy juxtaposition of thin colour that characterises M. Puvis de Chavannes. But I was wrong; I afterwards saw many works which were neither the one nor the other and yet gave me great pleasure.

Still there was some sense in the reflection. In truth either the eye or the mind must be appealed to. There are two elements in a picture: a kind of enjoyment which can only be given by a painting and cannot be derived from any other source; and an idea which might find literary expression, and which links the painter to the other arts apart from his own. Where the first element is to be found the second is rarely wanting; but the converse statement is not equally true. At the same time the idea is so important that pleasure may be derived from a work which reveals one, even when it is inadequately supplemented by the technical methods of art.

For my part I take great pleasure in merely reading the ideas of our young painters without any thought beyond. The subjects chosen by painters are important evidence of the state of mind of the period. They generally reveal intelligence and testify to a remarkably advanced culture. Their ingenuity of research, in this matter may perhaps divert them unduly from the study of their art; but this frame of mind reacts on art itself. For the human mind is a whole, and there are not two pigeon-holes in a man's brain, one for the subject and one for the execution.

I am struck at seeing how many painters read history, and how frequently they are inspired by myth and legend. The Bible and New Testament history no longer serve their turn; those subjects seem to have been exhausted. M. Lienhardt's *Madeleine au Tombeau*—"Mary Magdalen at the Tomb," is placed in a pretty landscape, but she lacks dignity, and suggests a milkmaid rather than a saint. M. Hitchcock's "Annunciation,"—a sweet figure in a field of white lilies—is borrowed from the Golden Legend rather than from the Gospel. Legends of Saints are indeed very popular, and I like M. Surand's St. George in silver armour, facing a finely designed dragon with an eagle-like head and sheathed in steely scales.

The prehistoric period with its poetical remoteness was still wanting. M. Boyé gives us a young girl (with her hair dressed to be sure in the latest fashion) leading a reindeer to drink; M. Faivre, a woman with a flint hatchet defending her children from a cave-bear! (*Ursus spelæus*). Well, I have nothing to say against it! The learning of painters, their study and choice of subjects, will be one of the features of the later half of this century.

Antiquity too is found here under its legendary aspect. I will say nothing of M. Duez's "Virgil," for it is a solemn mistake on the part of a very talented painter. I find much charm in M. Chalon's "Circe" whose divine nakedness gleams in a blue atmosphere amid the sacred serpents. It only lacks some of the magical colouring which always saves Gustave Moreau's pictures from looking like a transformation scene.

I here pass over the middle ages, which find a place in decorative painting, and I come to the third Republic which has also supplied a subject for a picture. It is a melancholy one. *Une Séance d'Escrime*—"A Fencing bout," by M. Lahaye. We see the fencing room at the Élysée; in the centre the lugubrious face of M. Wilson dressed for a fencing match. I could not help reflecting that his famous skill as a swordsman has not been of much use to him; though he has had more opportunities of giving proof of it than any man living.

To return to serious matters. Our painters have more poetry in them than might be supposed in a materialist age, and I am pleased to see that more than one is faithful to allegory which was so dear to the artists of the Renaissance. Here the first place belongs to M. Hébert, one of the most beautifully imaginative painters of the day. In his picture, *Aux Héros sans gloire*—"To the inglorious Heroes," his sad and drooping nymph, mysteriously embracing an obscure and a nameless tomb, strikes me as one of his loveliest figures, and I am happy to see M. Hébert in full possession of his noble poetic faculty.

It is mere chance which places next to his name that of M. Maignan, whose enormous allegorical work *Les Voix du Tocsin*—"The Voices of the Tocsin," is a fine composition; but, though it contains some good studies of the nude, it reveals power rather than grace and poetry.

E. HÉBERT



AUX HÉROS SANS GLOIRE

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I am led by this work of M. Maignan's to some of the noble decorative work exhibited in the Salon. M. François Flameng sends some more of his great decorative pictures for the Sorbonne, and though these vast canvases are on the whole less satisfactory than those he exhibited last year, they are very meritorious for the sense of air in them, for their picturesque details, the beauty of the landscapes melting into white mist, and their general charm of colour. M. Benjamin Constant's landscapes are less fresh and less airy, but I am greatly fascinated by the centre panel in which he has placed the new buildings of the Sorbonne with draped portrait-figures of the Deans of faculties in the foreground. M. Chartran contributes his share of this grand and impressive scheme of decoration—a fine subject of mediæval history.

I must also do homage to the high gift of inventiveness of M. Guillaume Dubufe. He is a painter worthy of all sympathy, undoubtedly one who gives the most thought to his work and who meditates most on the great masters. His immense Apotheosis of Victor Hugo is full of lofty and poetical invention, but the scheme of colour in blue and white is monotonous. Does it sound like a reproach to suggest that his rather overwrought method of execution sometimes hampers the grandeur of his conception? We may certainly look for great things from him if he will move in a less artificial atmosphere and improve his intimacy with nature.

The Salon must always be a medley and hap-hazard collection; I have, I think, sufficiently proved this. And at the same time I have proved to my fellow-critics how impossible it is to speak positively of the Salon. It is not to be done. As I read through these notes I perceive that every statement is open to dispute or at least must be taken with large reservations; and, do what I will, so it must ever be. It is as impossible to be precise in speaking of painting as in speaking of music. Speech is one art; painting is another. It is hard enough merely to translate one language into another. In French there is but one word for loving—*aimer*. The child "loves" sugar-plums and Romeo "loves" Juliet. In English there are two. And if there is such a difference between two languages what must there be between two arts?

Is it nevertheless possible to extract from the confusion some histor-

ical notion, at any rate of the state of art? I believe not. History can only be written of the past. Contemporaries cannot discern its broad outlines. I hear schools spoken of, to be sure, but I fail to distinguish them clearly. I am not at all of opinion that classic art is dead, nor that Courbet has buried Raphael. Let us see an Entombment or a *Vierge au Voile* and all the world will bow down to it. But people fancy that classic art has found its representatives in M. Bouguereau's filmy painting or M. Boulanger's arid style. They are too ready to triumph. Nor, as it seems to me, are the leaders of the opposition very clear as to their own purpose and doctrines. M. Gervex, for instance, has done a very good portrait in pastel of the Prince de Sagan, but as you look at his dry portrait in oils, and his incongruous picture called *The Tub,* pleasing enough, but feebly drawn, can you regard him as the head of a school? I cannot.

Still, the great French schools past and present, show their skill in portrait and landscape. They can hardly be discussed at any length, because nothing can be more vacuous than a description of scattered portraits or landscapes which can be no more seen. Here I find a strictly academic school following M. Cabanel, a very conscientious and classical one under M. Paul Dubois. I recognize M. Bonnat and M. Carolus-Duran as incomparable portrait painters, and both even more successful than usual this year. M. Carolus-Duran has painted his daughter, and fatherly feeling has lent him inspiration. M. Bonnat has been led by the chance advent of commissions to paint two very dissimilar heads. There is something indefinably theatrical, and a certain hardness—which time will soften no doubt, in his portrait of Cardinal Lavigerie, but they do not detract from its beauty. The noble features of this powerful ecclesiastic, who laid the foundation of French authority and of the Christian faith in Africa, could not have been painted with greater vigour. As to the portrait of M. Jules Ferry it is terrifically truthful; these are his very features, heavy and thick, his round, inexpressive forehead, his watery eyes, drooping lips, broken nose, and thin beard—a type devoid of dignity or fire. It is a daring picture, pitilessly real—revengefully real M. Ferry's enemies declare.

This makes me think of some other official portraits hanging near;

H. G. HERKOMER



PORTRAIT DE M. HUBERT HERKOMER

SALON DE 1885

that of M. Carnot by M. Yvon, and General Boulanger by M. Bin. But my theme is art, not politics; I can only pity the painters who have to depict these official heads, and I ask myself whether Franz Hals, for instance, could have made a fine picture of such insignificant or vulgar faces? I believe he might; but he would have had to put a wonderful amount of himself into them.

Again I observe the fine portrait of César Franck, the musician, by Mademoiselle Rongier; a pleasing and fashionable portrait by M. Machard; and a good portrait of a man by M. Gustave-Popelin. I must pause in front of a portrait by M. Raffaëlli, for it is marked by a quite novel treatment, an entirely original view of nature and may be the stamp of a new school. This portrait of M. de Goncourt is a historical record. We see here the history of that literary evolution, of which the brothers de Goncourt were in fact the first founders. All the life of this picture is in the accessories, which I read as so many symbols. A piece of Japanese lacquer, furniture and drawings from the eighteenth century, and all painted with amazing "go" and restrained force. As to the subject himself, he is ill—dying—dead. His bloodless hand hangs by his side, and his delicate, colourless face is lost in the hangings. It is scarcely visible. He exhales the fever and nervous excitation with which he has infected the age.

On quitting this sanctuary of sickly and superfine art may I be allowed a commonplace remark—a truly Philistine reflection? M. Raffaëlli has a perfectly individual way of viewing things. He sees everything black and sooty. Now every way of seeing things has its justification in nature, and his is not more false than many another. But a man must surely have the courage of his opinions in a very aggravated degree if he insists on being painted by an artist whose way of seeing things is so peculiar. If M. de Goncourt is to be handed down under this aspect to his grand nephews is he not afraid lest they should think him horribly ugly? And he, so true a lover of the eighteenth century, is he not grateful for the delightful pictures of our grand parents so mercifully bequeathed to us by Lépicié, J.-B. Massé and others? I merely ask the question.

What remains to be said of the landscape painters who were left

waiting in a crowd on the threshold of this discussion? First that I admire and delight in them, and should like to name them all. But how can I name them all, or even give any notion of their constantly increasing numbers, of their talent and their remarkable intuition of nature? I should like at least to arrange them under their colour-sergeants, as I may say. On one side we should see marine painters, powerful and solid masters of their craft, and at their head I still discern the but lately vanished form of the great Ulysse Butin; here are M. Berthelon, M. Renouf, M. Haquette, M. Tattegrain—painters of the storm and of rough seamen; M. Pierre Billet, one of Jules Breton's worthiest disciples, who treats rustic figures with the same poetical realism as his master; he especially appeals to me by painting northern coast scenes, the low flats where one could fancy oneself in mid ocean. There, with water all round them and the sky overhead, the poor fishermen's wives patiently pack their heavy nets in the chilly dawn, catching shrimps in the shifting sand.

These are all faithful to the ocean coast, sternly rendering its melancholy grandeur. Happier are the painters of the Mediterranean, whose eyes are charmed by the smiles of the sea, sung so long ago by Æschylus. What courage they must have to venture to transfer to canvas the dazzling and improbable hues which nature there flings broadcast. At a distance it is difficult to believe in water so blue, shadows so transparent, and dust so white, as M. Montenard shows us. They are so, nevertheless, and there are few artists who see more truthfully or paint with more easy frankness. Not far from him I discern M. Olive. His is a name to remember. A native of Marseilles and a pupil of Vollon's, I suspect that he has divined the secret of his master's fascinating effects of colour; he gives me the same intoxication of the eye. This blue sea seems to live as we gaze at it. But I even prefer the *Vieux Port de Marseille*—"The old port of Marseilles," at daybreak, it is a gem.

Next to these painters of southern glories I must not forget M. Ziem, who has fed his soul on them for so many years. I too have been to Venice in the summer, I too have seen that vision, have dreamed that dream of enchantment, rose-coloured palaces floating in golden water, and I can testify that the dream is reality.

P. OUTIN



PIÉTÉ FILIALE

SALON DE 1888

I trace Corot's poetical school in the spacious, hazy landscapes of M. Pointelin, and the fine study of mist by M. Alfred Smith. Daubigny's grace and vigourous brush are to be seen in M. Delpy's *Crépuscule après l'orage*—"Twilight after a storm," and still more in M. Guillemet's large canvases. The lofty classical style of landscape which M. Français delights in finds a successful adherent in M. Dardoize. Our revered master M. Harpignies, whose drawing is as sound and his light as lavish as ever, has a large following at his heels, among whom I must especially mention M. Lelièvre, who sends two bold landscapes. Then, what a number who paint our towns; M. Dufour with a fine view of Avignon, M. Lansyer, a master of architecture and perspective whom it is perhaps rather rash to compare with Canaletti; others, like M. Loir, study the landscape of Paris; or, like M. Le Poittevin and that bewitching artist, M. Damoye, the glorious plains of France. What talent and what toil!

I pause, for I could never have done. That these notes are inadequate I am well aware, but I must resign myself. During the past two months this Review has expended its unfailing and lavish resources in familiarizing even its most distant readers with what the Paris Salon contains. I am not called upon to give a posthumous guide to the Salon—a useless task—but to record a few notes and reminiscences, and that is what I have attempted.

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Most of the reflections to which I was led by the pictures in the Salon would apply equally well to the sculpture. It would, in the same way, be unfair to judge of French sculpture as a whole from that exhibited here, for it is not seen under its finest or completest aspect. We have every right to be proud of our school of sculpture; it will be one of the glories of our time in future ages. A school which can show such names as those of Mercié, Falguière, Chapu, Frémiet, and Paul Dubois at the head of a legion of brilliant disciples, may defy comparison with that of any country in any age.

There are not the same reasons for the decadence of sculpture in the present day as for that of painting.

A great sculptor whom I complimented on the state of his art, seeing it less influenced by fashion, less diverted from its ideal and more conscientious in the use of its methods, replied :

" It is not at all surprising; we make much less money."

He was right. There is something more austere and chaste in sculpture, it unites the eager study of the artist with the healthy manual toil of the workman. Barbier spoke wisely when he called Michael Angelo " The great stone-hewer." There is something of the artisan in every sculptor, and this is no degradation; quite the contrary. At the same time, far as it is above every other trade, art is a trade. Our great forefathers Luca Della Robbia, Donatello and Verocchio kept shops. And the shop still exists. The artist is as much at the mercy of the laws of economy as other producers; supply and demand rule his being. An artist whose time is his own, and who is sure of his living, is an ideal rarely met with; and where such an one exists, an obstacle supervenes which could hardly have been foreseen; he does not work. Necessity is the divinely appointed sovereign ruler of men. The artist works that he may live; he indulges his fancy only up to a certain point. He produces what he is asked for. And on the whole it is well. Artists are what society makes them. Consequently, if our capital school of sculpture does not year by year produce greater works, the fault is our own.

Our own,—because our luxury is petty and our dwellings small, and because we are less and less disposed to make a place for statues in our scheme of living. If any one has a fancy to decorate a park with the greenish sheen of bronzes, or the gleaming white of marble, there is no lack of sculptors to suit his requirements, as M. Dubois and M. Chapu could work for the Lord of Chantilly, and as M. Peynot has executed this year for the owner of Vaux, a fine classical group of sea-gods. It is the parks that are wanting, rather than the sculptors, and the wealthy Mœcenas. We live in nutshells, and we care little for anything grand. A sculptor of such power as M. Frémiet is commissioned to execute a little equestrian group, an exquisite work for a drawing-room bracket, which we should like to see on a scale suited to a palace or a public square. And so promising a young artist as

M. Dampt confines his efforts to the delicate but finikin grace of an ivory statuette.

Again it is we who are to blame, if our faces and fashions, when we call upon sculptors to represent them, are neither beautiful nor picturesque; and when, under the influence of classic tradition, they represent us nude, as M. Bartholdi has represented Paul Bert, we are ridiculous, and look as if we have just come out of a bath. We can fancy we see the red lines of the starched collar round the neck—that stigma of civilisation like the collar of the dog in the fable. It is a pity, "pity 'tis, 'tis true."

The statues of distinguished men executed for public places, learned gentlemen in frock-coats lifting one hand with an authoritative air, and laying the other on their apparatus and retorts, are small joy to the eyes. And the exhibition is constantly more crowded with busts and medallions, for the most part very good, but so numerous that it is impossible to notice them in detail. There are some charming and life-like medallions from the masterly chisel of M. Agathon Léonard; a pretty female bust, very fresh and light in the style of the last century, by M. Falguière; a good portrait of Renan by M. Bernstamm; one of Chevreul by M. Faget; a very subtly modelled head by M. Carlès; a Florentine head, gracefully executed by M. Chavalliaud; an elegant portrait head by M. Verlet; a fine head of an old woman, in bronze, most conscientiously wrought by M. d'Astanière. So many capital busts—but all lost time to statuary. Give us statues! should be our cry without ceasing. A hapless sculptor may reply:

"A bust is a pot-boiler."

I know it but too well.

I owe the bust no grudge, believe me. It is a form of art which has a dignity and beauty of its own. I stood in ecstasy before the lovely head and perfectly rounded shoulders which M. Rodin shows us, hardly raised from the marble background, for, with a happy imitation of Michael Angelo, he is fond of leaving the rugged matrix of rough marble as a contrast to that which his skilful hand has carved and polished. And for my part, I must own that I like to see the bust

left formless at the base; for the termination below, whether square or round, is often unsatisfactory, and by leaving the rough block from which the figure rises, the sculptor leaves something to fancy, and this is well.

But there are some statues, and some fine and good ones. M. Turcan's group, *L'Aveugle et le Paralytique*—"The blind man and the cripple," to which the "Médaille d'honneur" has been awarded, is undoubtedly worthy of it. The workmanship is conscientious, the composition learned, the anatomy irreproachable, the decorative treatment well understood. Such rare qualities as these should justify us perhaps in asking for no greater individuality of conception. It is a fine example of the French school of sculpture, and that is enough.

I must still mention the decorative work of M. Barrias, and M. Cordonnier's powerful and graceful group *La Maternité*—"Motherhood." Nor must the manly figures be overlooked which M. Caravanniez has executed for the four corners of a rather heavy monument to the Comte de Chambord; nor a pretty group by M. Allouard; nor a charming female figure by M. Mathet, *L'Hésitation*.

The queen by right divine of this throng of statues, is the triumphant *Diane chasseresse*—"Diana hunting," which M. Falguière exhibits for the third time, in marble, in which she is perhaps more lovely than in plaster or in bronze. Can you not see her, running, poised on one foot, her body thrown forward, the other foot keeping her balance, her arms bent to draw the bow, haughty, but smiling and excited by the chase. You can imagine the beauty of the exact effort of the muscles, the perfect correlation of the limbs, the equilibrium in motion of the human frame, that miracle of nature and of art. The movement of the loins, the natural and beautiful slope of the bust, the play of light and shade which, in the transparent marble, seems to make us feel the flow of the blood beneath the surface, and the exact line of the bones and sinews—all are perfect. It is one of the finest works in marble of this century.

In vain do I argue with myself. I like this better than frock-coats and trousers. It needs all the genius of M. Chapu, and M. Mercié, to

E. RICHTER



« SI JE N'ÉTAIS CAPTIVE »

(VICTOR HUGO Les Orientales)

SALON DE 1888

reconcile me to them. The group designed by M. Chapu to do honour to the memory of the two beneficent and worthy brothers Galignani has at any rate a friendly and familiar note, which will give pleasure to the hearts of the many friends the good old men have left to regret them. This group is to be placed in a public garden in the town of Corbeil, which owes much to their liberality, and where the passer-by may gaze on the kindly couple "in thin habit as they lived." I remember that one of them said to a friend who was complaining of the weariness, solitude and melancholy of advancing years :

"Found a hospital; that will make you happy!"

They were good, and they were happy, and thus has M. Chapu represented them. One is seated, the other is standing, and they are studying the plan of their hospital. There is nothing theatrical in their attitude, they are simply conversing with the placid contentment of two simple souls, with mutual kindliness, cheerfulness and affection. Rarely has sculpture so successfully recorded the smile that comes of a noble soul. The artist's skill is good, the heart he has put into his work is better still. I almost cease to see the frock-coats!

M. Mercié on the other hand, with all his talent, cannot make me forget them. This is, no doubt, because he had no such touching sentiments to embody. I am far from blaming the artist for this. The fault is in our age of ugliness. Was it worth while to apply so much skill to an effigy from top to toe of M. X. a banker at Constantinople? Was it M. X.'s habit in his life-time to stretch himself at full length on a divan, reading a book? Very possibly it was; but if M. X. could bequeath to his great grand-nephews a monumental record of his divan, of his furred pelisse, of his boots with all their buttons, it was because M. X. had a great deal of money. I do not learn that he had any other claim to the respect of posterity; and that is not a matter of any great interest, nor is it enough to inspire an artist.

I may be told that in Florence in the fifteenth century, citizens who had no better claim than this rich banker had fine statues made of themselves for their tombs, and it is true; but then they did not wear our hideous costume. Trousers by all means, if they are a convenient

form of garment, but do not let us perpetuate them on our monuments. Let sculpture give us allegorical subjects such as this by M. Injalbert, *La Douleur*—"Grief," wrought with his usual anxious care and skill. Sculpture excels in this range of subjects. It can only express very simple ideas, but the more simple the ideas are which art tries to embody, the more interest the arts can lend them.

As it is highly unlikely that I should reform the tastes of my time, I must be satisfied to deplore the fact that there are no better openings for the talent of our sculptors, and to rejoice that their talent is so conspicuous.

All through this hasty discussion of my subject, I have been compelled to drag in various matters which would seem foreign to art. The Salon—as I began by saying—bears no trustworthy and complete evidence as to the state of art. At the same time, we have no other. What it does bear witness to, and truly, is our intellectual needs and mental condition.

HENRY COCHIN.





NO DOWRY

When she entered the drawing-room, at one of the General's evening receptions, her sweet face wreathed in a smile, and her lovely shoulders exposed to view, a murmur of flattery arose from the group of officers collected near the door. Behind her, her mother, majestic in the somewhat showy dress of a woman who has passed all her life in the provinces, fluttered her white curls with an exulting gesture, which seemed to say: "This is my daughter!" And her slim father, the gentle and unassuming Colonel of the Hundred and Twenty-third, brought up the rear, doing his best not to tread upon the trains of their robes.

She had scarcely taken her seat when a cluster of lieutenants and captains, the pick of the Versailles garrison, braced up in their full-dress uniforms, some with sandy moustache, some with dark, here a musing gaze, there a bold one, pressed forward to the assault upon her ball-programme. And under the golden radiance of the lustres, the light and graceful girl began to dance to the strains of the music, borne on the arms of the striplings who were eager to give her pleasure.

For them her wishes were orders, her whims were laws. The Colonel's

daughter! About the time for settling promotion a casual word of praise from her mouth—as "Lieutenant So-and-So is a charming officer! How well he waltzes!"—was enough to influence a whole career.

She marshalled them, too, as though she were putting them through a military movement, with an imperious and coquettish voice of command.

Thus she had completed her twenty-second year, living a very cheerful life, passing from one end of France to the other, from garrison to garrison, with banner unfurled and trumpet sounding, in a somewhat nomadic existence. Her mother began to show signs of impatience, for she had hoped to see her married. But a terrible barrier stood between her and the men who sought her hand, across which were written these fatal words: "No dowry." So the officers flirted, laughed, danced, but never seemed to think of marriage.

To please the Colonel's daughter, so as to secure good recommendations, was an excellent idea; but to go to the length of marrying her was quite another song to sing. And nobody seemed inclined to learn the tune—at any rate none of the men who would have been received with favour. For a year at least the maiden had had a lover, timid and trembling, at whom—ungrateful creature!—she freely laughed. He was a big fellow, with a red moustache and blue eyes, a Lorrainer by birth, educated at the school of Saint-Maixent. He had entered the army at eighteen, had been wounded at the battle of Coulmiers, and wore the "médaille militaire." But, as he had not passed through Saint-Cyr, he was looked down upon. A peasant's son, he was strong and ruddy; and he could not speak much, though he had had a fair education. Distinguished in the field, he lost ground in the drawing-room. It was all he could do to dance. The mere dread of being thought wanting in refinement had once impelled him to ask the young girl to be his partner, and he had so effectually confounded the figures of the Boston that the cleverest dancers could not tell what they were about. This lamentable attempt was enough for him; and rather than face again those mocking glances, he would have cheerfully marched upon a battery of artillery on the point of firing.

Buried in the recess of a window, he would look on for hours at the

girl whom he worshipped, as she danced with gay vivacity. He pursued the little flighty head amidst the eddying crowd, and caressed the white shoulders with his eyes. Now and then he made bold to approach the mother, paying her ceremonious attention. This was the height of his audacity.

With envy he saw his comrades flutter like butterflies around the young girl, and showing themselves off to the best advantage.

Full of gloomy sadness, he would say to himself : "One of these days the news that she has married one or other of these fellows will go the round of the mess, and all will be over." He had fits of despair in the cold silence of his lodgings. He tried to reason with himself. What a fool he was to go and dream of this spoilt child, cut out as she was for the softness of a luxurious life! She was destined for some well-born heir, and not for a poor soldier of fortune. But in spite of himself his thoughts always flew back to her. He used to see her through sleepless nights, ever whirling round, light and laughing, in the intoxication of the waltz. She seemed to be summoning him, with tantalizing coquetry, and he would think : "Who knows? Perhaps she might accept me!" Then his heart throbbed violently in his breast, until he nearly choked. One morning he could bear it no longer. Life under these conditions had become impossible to him. He sought out the Major, who had always shown an interest in him, and begged him to see the Colonel, and, without actually putting the question, to feel his way as to the kind of reception which might be accorded to an offer of marriage. He spent that day on the margin of the Swiss Lake, watching the carp as they leaped in the sun, already repenting of his action, and promising himself a future of unrelieved blackness.

That evening, in the barrack-square, the Major took him aside, and said to him in a dry voice :

"I saw the Colonel. He was in great form, and here is his answer. 'Your man hasn't a sou; my daughter has no dowry. It would be coupling hunger and thirst.' By Jove, he is right; don't think of the wench. And if your are hipped, comfort yourself with a touch of philosophy."

The lieutenant thanked him, but he did not attempt to comfort himself, and as they wanted officers for Tonkin, he offered himself. A week later he took ship at Brest. And whilst he was borne away, with a full heart, over the stormy waters of the open sea, the young girl, careless and happy, danced on amidst the brightness and the flowers, to the sweet strains of the music.

* * *

Two years had passed away. The General still received his guests, but at these brilliant military balls the charming girl who once turned every head was no longer seen. The Colonel of the Hundred and Twenty-third had died suddenly on the eve of winning his stars. For the two women a cramped and dull existence succeeded their former bright and frivolous life. All the brisk sons of Mars who used to flutter so gallantly about them had passed away, with the departed pleasure and gaiety.

The new Colonel of the regiment had a wife and a daughter of his own. All the court, all the devotion, was now for them, the queens of the hour. For the queens of yesterday there was the absent salutation in the street, followed by the disappearance of a man in a hurry.

The orphan and the widow would on such occasions exchange a bitter smile, and slowly pass on their way. They used to go into the park, near the Tapis Vert, to enjoy the warmth of a pleasant autumn, whose sun gilded the marble of the statues, and seared the leaves of the great chestnuts. They sat in their black mourning dress, and in the sound of the military music found once more as it were a ray of their old happiness. It seemed to them as though nothing were changed in their existence, and the Colonel's voice would resound strong and loud behind them, saying : "Good morning, ladies! It is the band of the Hundred and Twenty-fourth which plays to-day. It is far from being so good as ours."

But the shouts of the children, playing in the garden, were the only sounds they heard. And the mother, with a sigh, did her best to read the papers, through glasses which were misty with tears; whilst her daughter cast stealthy and melancholy glances at her former partners,



who did not recognize her now. She was nearly twenty-five, and her beauty, refined by grief, possessed a more effective grace. She was like a flower freshened and made sweeter by a storm of rain. She had put aside her old vivacity, like that of a filly broken loose, which had given her a wild and disturbing power of attraction. Now, grave and gentle, she seemed to be doing penance for her past joy.

One day, when the music was playing, a new figure greeted her sight amongst the officers who were walking up and down, smoking, talking, and laughing, and whom she was wont to meet every afternoon. In an instant there came back to her the General's balls, and her timid lover, effaced in a corner, devouring her with his eyes. She said to her mother :

"Oh, mamma, look! The lieutenant!"

He had seen her also, for he had turned pale; and, quitting his companions, he came forward, képi in hand. The old lady hastily folded her papers, and, clearing the chair in front of her, indicated it to the officer with a kindly smile.

"Lieutenant, is it you? Ah, it is so long since we met! We are indeed happy to see you. But I beg your pardon—I called you lieutenant, and I see a third stripe on your sleeve."

Then he turned red, and told her how, at the end of a three months' campaign, after the affair of Nam-Dinh, he had been made Captain. Then he had been shut up in Tuyen-Kuan, with Commandant Dominé. A terrible siege of five weeks, constantly in the breach, repelling the furious attacks of the Chinese army, defending the ruined walls of the fort, without intermission, against the waves of their men. He had been wounded on the last day, in a final sortie, when in the distance, above the clamour of those yellow hordes, the French trumpets were heard, announcing their relief. Ah, it was a moment of intoxication! He saw the enemy flee, he saw the tricolour appear, and then he fell, without regret, because they were victorious. His condition had been thought so serious that he was sent home to France, with the cross on his breast. On the journey he had almost recovered, and when he reached home he had been put down on the list for promotion to the grade of Major.

The two women were silent; the mother, with her experience of the profession, computing that the Captain had gained an advantage of ten years over all his comrades; the daughter scanning the young man, and thinking that he was hardly the same as of old, with his pale and lengthened face, which gave him a great air of distinction. Was it possible that they had thought scorn of this brave soldier, who, having bought every step of promotion with his blood, now returned to them with assured prospects for the future?

He looked at her, also. Was this grave and pensive creature the girl whom he had known so giddy and wild? There was another woman here, a hundred times more charming in her saddened and anxious grace. She had betwitched him before, now she took him by storm. It was thus he had pictured her in his dreams. Yes, it was she—still as handsome, and a hundred times better.

Their eyes met; and she read in his such wealth of devotion that she turned away, slightly troubled. The evening was drawing on, and the two women rose. Unable to tear himself away, he escorted them to their door.

Next day he found them again near the band, and every day thereafter. He took his seat by the daughter, and whilst the mother read her papers, they talked without ceasing, and yet said nothing. Autumn crept on, the rust-coloured leaves strewed the walks, and it grew too cold for sitting still. But the Captain and the girl kept up their walks in the alleys of the deserted park, walking side by side with the sympathetic gait of lovers.

Thus December went by, and their intimacy became continually more delightful. But the Captain seemed now and again to be uneasy and nervous. One day, in a rush of passion, he pressed her arm against his breast; his eyes flashed, and she thought he was going to say, "I adore you!" But he did not speak, and sank into a fit of gloom. He went frequently to Paris, and saw less of the two women. A dull anxiety troubled him. Had they been deceived? What mystery was he creating?

On the last day of December, at six o'clock, he had not made his appearance. The widow was reading her evening journal, which contained

a list of promotions in the army. Suddenly she turned very red, and uttered an exclamation.

"His name is down! He has gained his step!"

At that instant a hurried tread was heard without, the door opened, and the long-expected one came in. He smiled with deep emotion, and stood before the two women. The mother stretched out her arms.

"Ah, my dear boy! It was that which troubled you, then?"

But he turned to the girl with loving pride :

"Mademoiselle, at last I have a hope of success which I can lay at your feet. I love you. Will you be my wife?"

She grew pale as she remembered her first refusal, and, thinking of all that the brave man had done to deserve his happiness, she gave him her hand. With her head on his shoulder, her lips on the rough braid of lace which he had so gallantly won, she wept for joy.

GEORGES OHNET.



THE OPERA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV AND THE REGENCY



In the last days of the year 1702 the Academy of Music was the talk of the town. A new lyric tragedy was in active rehearsal there and everything seemed to forecast a great success; the work itself, the chief performer's name, and that of the composer. Among all the successors of Lulli who for the past ten years had been competing for the empire of the lyric stage, the latest comer, a chapel-master, already verging on the forties and a noted composer of motets, had, with the production of his *Europe Galante,* in 1697, taken the first rank. This opera-ballet had made such an immediate and a great success that the name of André Campra, hitherto known only in churches and concert-rooms, had quickly spread amongst the public, although the author, the choir-

master at Notre-Dame, had deemed it prudent to guard against losing his post by signing his first lyric work with the name of his brother Joseph, a violincellist at the Opera. But this reserve had not lasted long, and the success of his *Hésione,* produced with the same precaution had still further increased his renown at the same time that it dimmed the star of Colasse and Marais, Destouches and Desmarets.

After this double success, the author had thrown off all disguise and quitted the Church; thus the stake he was going to play with *Tancrède* was one of capital importance, and the curiosity of opera-goers among both courtiers and citizens was excited to an extraordinary pitch, at the approach of this big musical event. It was a question, remember, of finding out whether the ex-chapel-master had not been in too great a hurry to cast off the short cape and the surplice, or whether he was going still further to surpass himself and stand forth as the direct heir, almost as the equal, of the great Lulli, while his rivals would be brought to the pass of admitting his glorious supremacy. What finer theatrical subject could he have chosen than the pathetic episode of the loves of Tancred and Clorinda, in the *Jerusalem delivered?* And what artist could he have wished for better suited to the heroine's part of Clorinda than the intrepid and dashing Maupin, whose romantic and loose adventures, wild love-affairs and duels, had given her a notoriety at least equal to the fame of her beauty and talents?

For she had a superb voice, had this accomplished duellist, an admirable deep-treble voice (*contralto* we should now call it) which had been already highly appreciated from the time of her first appearance, as Pallas in *Cadmus,* but which she had not yet been able to make the most of, the usage of the time being to write only secondary parts in these lower registers. With the rare ear for voices that he had acquired in his chapel-mastership, Campra had perceived what a splendid effect he could get out of those superb lower notes and, breaking out of hand with all academic traditions, he had not shrunk from scoring the chief part of Clorinda expressly for the Maupin. He was already sure that she would give a splendid rendering of it from the dramatic point of view : it remained to be seen whether the songstress with her magnificent voice,

would be equal to so considerable a part, and whether her ignorance of musical technicalities, which she was accustomed to make up for by sheer strength of memory, would not play her false at the critical moment.

What a crowd, too, in the Opera-house, on Tuesday, the 7th of November, 1702, and what animation in the neighbourhood of the theatre on the stroke of four! The spectators poured from all quarters into the Rue Saint-Honoré, one stream by the Rue de Richelieu or the Place du Palais-Royal, a second by the Rue des Bons-Enfants; some in coaches, others in sedan-chairs, preceded by running footmen or by negroes with plumed hats, others again more modestly a-foot, dexterously jumping from one paving-stone to another, so as not to soil a neatly-stockinged ankle! What a hurry they are in, these lucky ones for the day : noble lords swaggering behind the scenes; wits in quests of an epigram to hawk about at fashionable bed-side receptions, ladies of quality, lawyers' wives, financiers' dames, showing off their rival toilets, head-gear, and diamonds; poor devils of artists and musicians, scattered among this brilliant throng; men of letters allowed to have their say about the new piece in the *Mercure* or the *Gazette;* others again, without the critic's passport, who in default of the pen wield the authority of the tongue! With what haste all these spectators rush pell-mell into a little doorway at the corner of a no-thoroughfare and mount a staircase springing almost from the street itself, as high-pitched and straight as Jacob's ladder!

This little doorway, over against the Palais-Royal, at the corner of the blind alley called Court-Orry, was the sole entrance to the Opera. For the Academy of Music then occupied, in the Palais-Royal, the house where it has remained longest among the thirteen habitations, temporary or permanent, that have successively sheltered it in Paris. It was in reality the third house made over to the Opera since it had been founded by letters-patent of Louis XIV, on the 28th of June, 1669; but it had spent so short a time in the two preceding ones, that it is sufficient merely to take passing note of them.

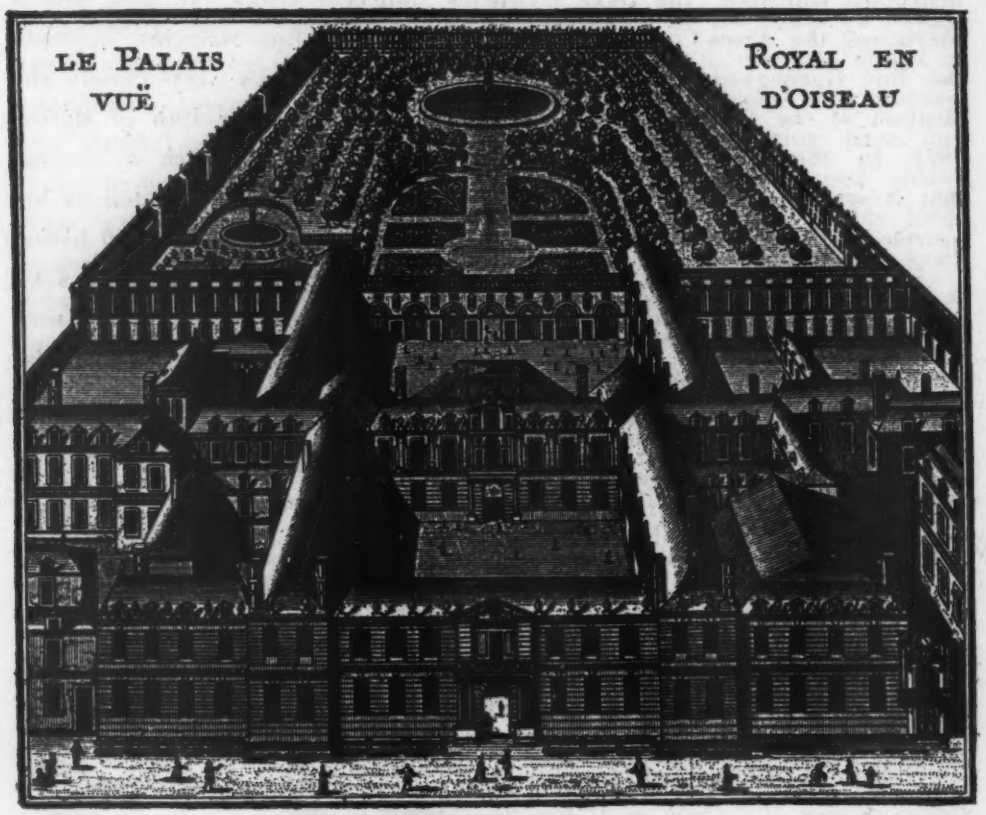
When Perrin obtained the letters-patent that conferred on him the privilege of establishing at Paris and in the other towns of the kingdom "Academies of Opera or representations in music and French verse" he

had taken as associates Cambert for music, the Marquis de Soudéac for machinery, and Champeron for the business-management; then, while *Pomone,* the outcome of this quadruple partnership was in rehearsal at the Hôtel de Nevers (now the Bibliothèque Nationale) whose great gallery had been placed at Perrin's disposal by the Marquis de Mazarin, he had instructed Guichard, the Duke d'Orléans' officer-of-works, to turn into a playhouse the Fives-Court of La Bouteille, in the Rue Mazarine, opposite the Rue Guénégaud. The Passage du Pont-Neuf marks very closely the position of the first Opera-house, formally opened on the 19th of March, 1671, by the production of *Pomone :* this opera had such a success that it was played for eight months running and Perrin pocketed as his quarter-share of profits, the nice little round sum of thirty thousand livres.

Such handsome profits aroused the envy of Lulli, who, endowed as he was with a rare talent for intrigue, stirred up discord among the partners and found so effective a way of using the influence he enjoyed with the King and Madame de Montespan that he solicited and obtained in 1672 new letters-patent revoking in his favour those of 1669. A royal letter to the lieutenant of police La Reynie ordered him to put a stop, from the 1st of April, to the Abbé Perrin's performances. Lulli had a new theatre built for himself at the Bel-Air Fives-Court, close to the Luxembourg and situated in the Rue de Vaugirard, on the ground where the turning into the Rue de Médicis now is. This house, built by the same Guichard who had been associated with Perrin, and provided with machinery by Vigarani, a gentleman of Modena, was thrown open on the 15th of November, 1672, with the first performance of *Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus,* by Molière, Benserade, Périgny and Quinault, with music by Lulli and Desbrosses. This new house threatening, however, to fall in, the Academy



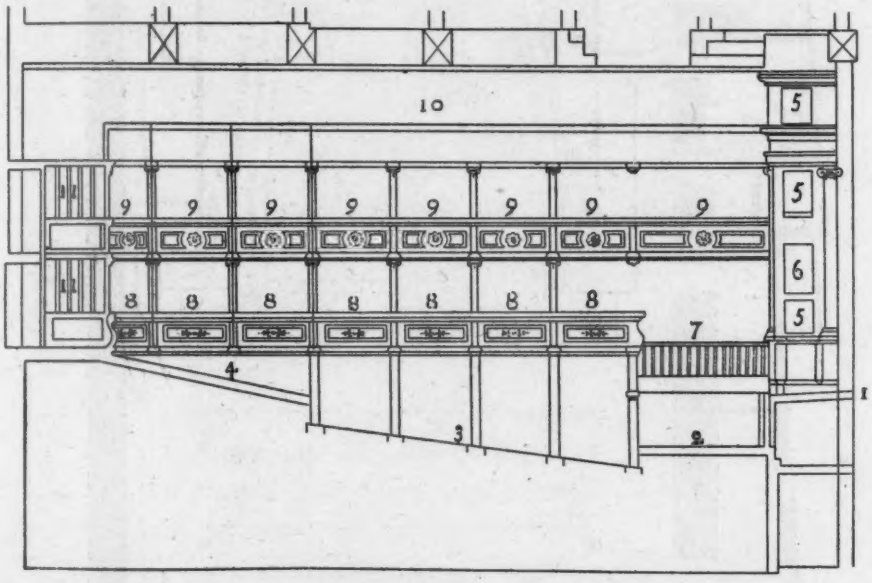
of Music had had to return to its first home at the Fives-Court of La Bouteille. Lulli had just brought out his *Cadmus* there (11th of February, 1673) when, six days later, Molière died. Discord at once arising in the comedy company, the Italian profited by these dissensions to get it sent away from the Palais-Royal Theatre, that Molière and his players held under



the King's protection since 1660, and to secure its reversion for himself; the Academy of Music took possession of it on the 15th of June, 1673.

This house, built by J. Lemercier, in 1637, under Richelieu's instructions, was situated on the right of the entrance to the Palais-Royal court-yard. On the outside there was nothing to indicate a playhouse; it had, in fact, been built for the private entertainments of the Cardinal, who amused himself by having *Mirame*, *L'Europe Galante,* etc., perfor-

med there, and his guests gained access to it, as a matter of course, through the chief court-yard. After it had been made over to Molière, and subsequently to Lulli, the private entrance through the Palace building was kept for the Duke d'Orléans; but an entrance was made for the public, just at the corner of the Palace and of a blind alley that turned out of the Rue Saint-Honoré, and that became, in 1782, the end of the

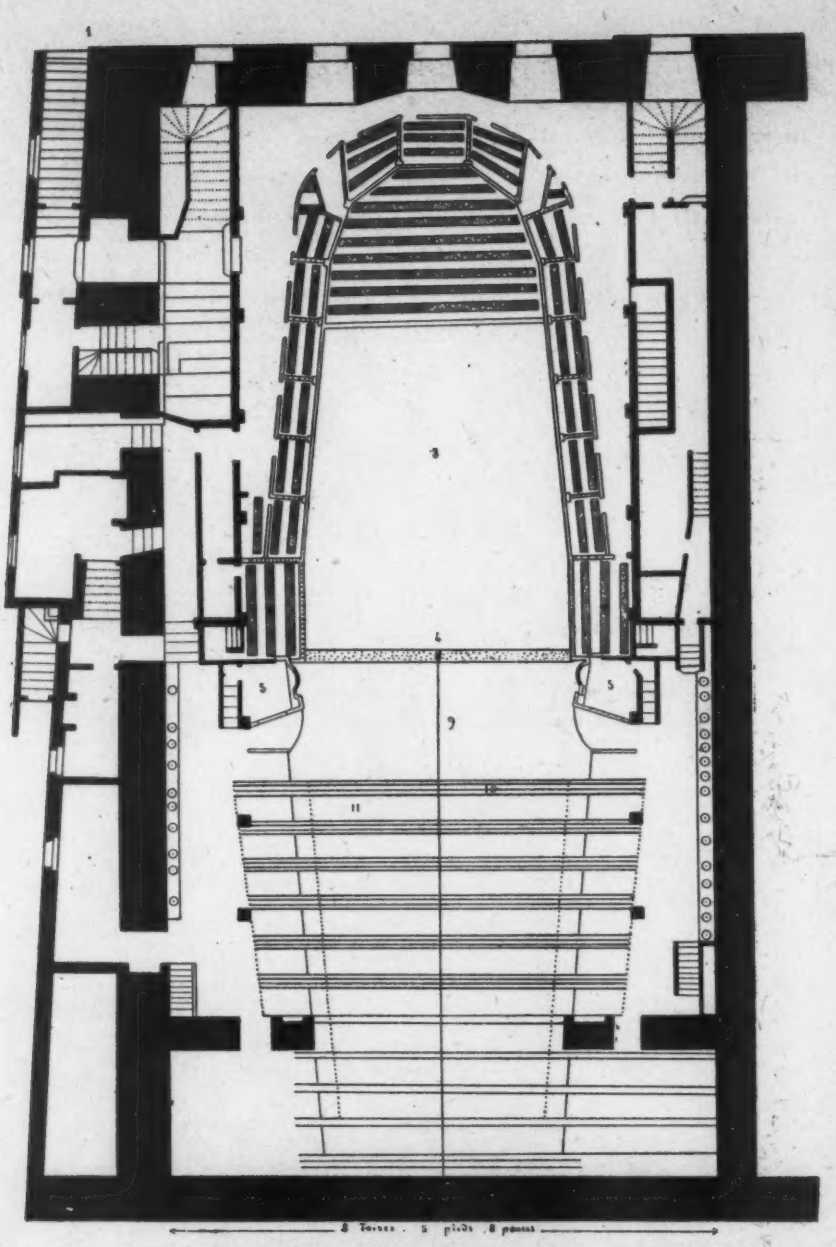


SECTION-PLAN OF THE OPERA-HOUSE IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL (1673–1763).

1. Floor of the stage. — 2. Floor of the orchestra. — 3. Sloping-floor of the standing-pit. — 4. Amphitheatre. — 5. Stage-boxes. — 6. Royal box. — 7. Balconies. — 8. First-tier boxes. — 9. Second-tier boxes. — 10. Third-tier (without boxes). — 11. Open-work partitions separating boxes.

Rue de Valois. From that part of the Palace which looked on the alley, a building was thrown out containing a straight staircase that gave access to every tier, and this no-thoroughfare, then called Court-Orry, gradually changed its name to the more significant one of Opera Alley.

As for the house itself, that was entirely demolished and rebuilt for the Academy of Music; only the four walls were left intact. Besides a ground floor comprising an orchestra for the musicians, an ample pit without seats and an amphitheatre reaching to the level of the lower boxes, it consisted of three tiers. The two first were divided into



PLAN OF THE AUDITORIUM (1st tier) AND OF THE STAGE OF THE OPERA-HOUSE IN THE PALAIS-ROYAL (1673-1763).

1. Entrance-door in the Rue Saint-Honoré, at the corner of the blind alley, and staircase leading to the three tiers of the house. — 2. Amphitheatre. — 3. Pit (on the ground-level). — 4. Musicians' orchestra (on ground-level). — 5. Stage-boxes. — 6. Balconies, giving access to the stage on the same level (the front of the balconies was not in solid wood, like the front of the boxes, but in trellis-work, as indicated in the dotted lines). — 7. Central box at the back of the amphitheatre. On each side, between this box and the balconies were seven first-tier boxes separated by open-work partitions, as shewn in the dotted lines, and furnished with benches, which were retained until the building of the Opera-house in the Rue Le Peletier. — 8. Foot-lights. — 9. Proscenium. — 10. Small trap-doors, for the working of the framework carrying the scenery. — 11. Large trap-doors forming the floor of the stage. — O. Counterpoises for the scenery ranged in their groove.

separate boxes with open-work partitions. The third, called "paradise," formed a sort of gallery where every one chose his place for himself, and in the rear of which people could promenade at will : it was the favourite haunt of pages and of loose women, and peaceful spectators were too often disturbed by the noisy habits and unseemly behaviour of these persons.

Each tier comprised fifteen boxes, in addition to two balconies and two stage-boxes. These balconies, the chosen resort of people of fashion, were not actually on the stage, as is so often stated, through confusion with the Comédie-Française. They were between the stage-boxes and the boxes in the house itself (they were about the width of the two boxes that, nowadays, adjoin the stage boxes), only the balconies on the first tier being just on a level with the stage and at the corner of the theatre, people could enter or leave them by the stage itself, and that is what made these places so sought after. At the same time that the house was rebuilt the floor of the theatre was raised and the "flies" made higher to facilitate the working of the scenery. Such as it was, this house was calculated to hold at the most 1600 spectators, even taking into account the standing pit, for which, on the fullest days, more than 800 tickets were never issued, and the top gallery where people could be packed close.

The entrance to the Opera, at the corner of the blind alley and the Rue Saint-Honoré, was for more than seventy years the simplest affair possible, a common wooden door; but in 1750, the City having bought the house on the other side of the alley, to turn them into lobbies, dressing rooms, etc., connecting them with the Opera by a bridge thrown over the alley, a somewhat more decent entrance was built, a stone doorway, with a wrought iron balcony, surmounted by a pediment with a dial in the middle. And to complete the symmetry, the same design was repeated on the building appropriated to the management which had just been erected at the other corner of the alley and which, the dial excepted, was similar to the one serving as entrance to the Opera.

Notwithstanding all these improvements, the house remained low, narrow, inconvenient for the public; the service of the theatre was also very

badly accommodated, for the stage, being built on a level with the ground, had no under part in which to let down the scenery. Notwithstanding all these inconveniences, notwithstanding the complaints of managers like Thuret, who suggested the imposition of a twelvepenny duty on every pack of cards made, the amount thereby produced to be devoted to be construction of a new house; notwithstanding the overtures of the Prince de Conti who offered, in accord with Cardinal Fleury and M. de Chauvelin, to get a new theatre built on ground of his own, the Opera, considered as an appanage of the Palais-Royal, and one that the Regent was never willing to let be moved, remained in this home no less than ninety years.

* * *

There, then, it was, in this middling-sized house, crammed to the roof with a magnificent crowd, that Campra's *Tancrède* appeared, with a striking success that sealed the author's reputation and was prolonged for more than sixty years, for there were brilliant revivals of the opera, during the course of the century, and the superb duet for the two basses, Isménor and Argant, as well as Herminie's touching air, may count among the number of the most lovely inspirations of French music. From that day forward, Campra had nothing more to fear from either Marais or Colasse; in musical science and wealth of inspiration he far surpassed the Chevalier Destouches, who, although not without happy gifts, was incapable of harmonising and orchestrating his musical ideas and had, for that part of his work, to apply to those more learned than himself. This little detail, for that matter, was no concern of his gracious Majesty's, who had been pleased by *Issé,* in 1697, and had sent Destouches a present of a hundred louis, adding that he was the only man who did not make him regret Lulli. Briefly, putting the sovereign's opinion on one side, Campra was beyond all question the direct heir of the deceased composer and was destined, even in the eyes of posterity, to rank deservedly first during the fifty years' interval between the death of Lulli and the appearance of Rameau.

What a success for the composer! but what a triumph, too, for the singer! This part of Clorinda gave the finishing touch to the reputation

of the Maupin, just at the moment when she was thinking of taking leave of the Opera for ever. She had already quitted it once to go to Brussels, where she had become the mistress of the Elector of Bavaria. But there is nothing stable, nothing of which one does not tire, so this Prince having tired of her, sent her forty thousand francs with orders to leave Brussels, entrusting this mission to no other than his new mistress's husband. Maupin, in a rage of indignation, threw the money at the head of this philosophic husband yelling at him that it was a reward worthy of a blackguard like himself; history sayeth not whether the man pocketed the money with the compliment. Three years after her success with *Tancrède* she gave up the Opera, in 1705, and died two years later at the age of only thirty-three.



Mademoiselle Maupain dansant à l'opera

What anecdotes have not been told about this intrepid amazon who was as fine a swordswoman as a songstress, brave to recklessness, passionate to the verge of madness! Was it not she who, they say, being seized with an insensate fancy for a young girl at Marseilles, pursued her even into the convent where her parents had placed her? With these masculine tendencies, is it astonishing that the Maupin should have frequently dressed up as a man, that she, who had been the mistress of Seranne, the fencing-master, should be a neat hand with the rapier and draw on the slightest occasion?

Her comrade Duménil, who never sang better than when he had been indulging in the bottle, having insulted her on the stage one day, she waited for him the same evening in the Place des Victoires and there, disguised as a man, tried to force him to fight; on his refusing, she gave

him a sound caning and took his snuff-box and watch. The next day, Duménil gave his own version of the adventure in the green room of the Opera; he had, he said, been attacked by three robbers whom he had ultimately put to flight, but not without the loss of his watch and snuff-box in the struggle. As soon as he finished, Maupin turned upon him : "You are a liar, miserable coward that you are! It was I alone who did the trick, and to prove what I say, here are your trinkets." It was ill jesting with a woman of this character, and her comrade Thévenard having also offended her, and fearing similar treatment, remained prudently in hiding for three weeks at the Palais-Royal; after which, to put an end to his anxiety, he came and civilly begged the Maupin's pardon.

They must have been friends again when they played Clorinda and Tancred together in Campra's beautiful opera. Thévenard was at the height of his career and talent at the epoch when he created this part : he had made his first appearance about 1690, and had at once given a hitherto unknown importance and lustre to the baritone parts, called then *deep-tenors;* he had rapidly outshone Dun, Laforêt, Beaumavielle and Rossignol in this line, considered a secondary one before he appeared. "Thévenard had an air of nobility," wrote La Viéville de Fréneuse; "his voice was sonorous, mellow, and of great compass; a little 'throaty' too, but even this defect the singer had the skill to make agreeable. Never did musician understand the art of singing better. It is to him that we owe the natural and fluent manner of delivering recitative, without letting it die away, by dwelling on certain notes so as to bring out the voice. He was of robust health and nearly every day sat very long at table; wine poured in streams down his throat, with the result of strengthening his voice. He pursued this regimen, which he found to agree with him, for full fifty years. Forty of these he spent at the Opera; he retired in 1730, with a pension of 1500 livres." Duménil and Thévenard often had enough to do to stand upright when they came on the stage; but the public was then very indulgent towards this kind of indisposition, and all the remonstrances of writers could not change them : "It is disgraceful," wrote La Viéville once more, "that a knave should dare to appear on the stage, unable to stand, or turning the grave passages of a piece

into farce and buffoonery by ridiculous postures and jokes, as was the daily practice of Duménil. Our opera managers ought to keep a firmer hand than they do."

But how be severe with Thévenard, Duménil or any one else, when his gracious Majesty himself, delighted with the voice of Boutelou, a delicious high-tenor voice, overlooked all his freaks, all the errors of a life of extravagance, ordered him to be served with a meal of six courses when he chanced to be cast into prison, and lost no time in paying the amount owing so as not to be deprived longer of his favourite singer? It was always a pet weakness of the singers and ballet-dancers of the last century not to pay their debts, and it was good form to withdraw now and then to the seclusion of a prison; but the artists of Lulli's company often had to reproach themselves with something more than peccadilloes of this sort.

This same Duménil, an ex-cook who had made his first appearance in *Isis,* in 1677, and who had shared the position of first tenor with Cladière, whom he soon eclipsed, had a mania for pillaging the actresses of the Opera; as soon as they possessed a bit of jewelry to his taste, hey presto! he laid hands on it. He regularly took the bows and bunches of ribbon from his costumes and used them to ornament his house, as trimming for his seats and cushions, which thus cost him a mere trifle.

After details like these, the feelings of regret that Lulli's disappearance inspired in La Viéville are easily understood. "He was a capital fellow," says he, "for keeping a whole opera to its duty; he knew how to break a fiddle over the back of an ill-behaved musician, lecture a songstress in mighty expressive terms, and give a thump or two to an inattentive actor, with the noblest and most exemplary air in the world." And do you know the very simple means the same writer points out to arrive at the perfection of the opera in Italy, where every actor is always attentive to his part and perfect in his cue? It is to keep the men from the bottle and the women from the men on opera days: "You have there," says he, "the two great sources of all the whims and impertinence of our actors and actresses." A prohibition excellent in theory, but how difficult to carry out!

And the kick the irascible Lulli administered to Marthe Le Rochois, forced to confess to him that she had been unduly complaisant to Lebas, a bassoon in the orchestra, is that another of the ordinary means of discipline that La Viéville would like to have prescribed at the Opera? All the same this somewhat easily tempted Marthe Le Rochois was distinguished among all the artists in Lulli's company by her gentleness of character and her comparative education. This woman, who was one of the most admirable of tragic actresses in French opera, had not merely a magnificent voice; she also possessed dramatic inspiration, and as soon as she attacked a phrase of recitative, her superb eyes gleamed with the utmost brilliancy, her noble and dignified gestures made her seem taller; all the physical disadvantages of the woman, her shortness, her swarthy skin, her thin arms disappeared : people only had eyes for the plaintive Arethusa, the ravishing Angelica, the enchantress Armida, Armida, her finest part in which she succeeded in eclipsing her two confidants, two of the loveliest creatures in the Opera, Fanchon Moreau and Desmâtins.

She eclipsed them on the stage and befriended them behind the scenes. To all her other merits and good qualities Marthe Le Rochois added a modesty, a simplicity that made her interest herself in, and give advice to, those of her comrades who seemed to her to possess any serious vocation; she had no mean envy and took some pains, in particular, in the training of an ex-scullion from the Carré Saint-Martin who had begun by a great success as a dancer, on account of her beauty, and who had afterwards turned towards singing parts, in which her lack of dramatic aptitude kept her among the confidants. Marthe Le Rochois had, however, fancied a certain instinct was discernible in this weak character and tried hard to wake her out of her natural torpor by setting her to work at the part of Medea. One day, as the scholar was going more or less badly through the scene in which Medea endeavours to detain Jason by her tears :

"Get thoroughly hold of the situation," said her mistress to her. "Put yourself in the place of the betrayed woman. If you were abandoned by a man whom you passionately loved, what would you do?" "Faith,

I should make haste to get another lover." "In that case, we are both of us wasting our time!" replied Marthe Le Rochois.

None the less she persevered in this ungrateful task, and it was thanks to her and to her excellent advice that the Desmâtins was enabled to succeed her when she retired in 1728. She lived thenceforth in relatively easy circumstances, what with the pension of one thousand livres allowed her by the Opera, and another she had from her former protector, the Duke de Sully, but without ceasing to interest herself in her beloved Opera, for she trained, once more, two singers of repute, Marie Antier, and Françoise Journet. Who then, in this *Tancrède* of Campra's that so delighted both courtiers and citizens in 1702, who had been able to fill satisfactorily the important part of Herminie by the side of the Maupin? This very Mademoiselle Desmâtins, whom a premature stoutness, of which she was fated to die three years later—through her attempts to get rid of it—had not yet rendered unfit for service. The ex-kitchen-wench was so proud of her stage exploits as a queen, a princess, or a sorceress, that she dressed in their sumptuous robes in her own home, where she held a court as though she were on the stage. Finally, when she found herself become of immoderate bulk, she was foolish enough to have twelve pounds of fat taken from her, and to celebrate her convalescence, she hit upon the idea of offering her friends a sumptuous repast, in which the dishes seemed deliciously cooked. A few weeks later she died from this mad frolic, and her guests never knew what a singular banquet had been served up to them.

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In this year 1702, the starting point of our study, the Opera was a long way from being prosperous : the result not only of the lack of great composers, but of the mismanagement of Francine, Lulli's son-in-law, who had obtained the patent as by inheritance on the death of his father-in-law, and who, for close on a score of years, so manœuvred that with an enterprise bringing in, under Lulli, 60,000 livres a year, he had heaped up liabilities of nearly 400,000 livres. He tried divers ways, more or less honest, of escaping from his embarrassments, hawking his

patent to third parties, as insolvent as himself, so entangling his affairs, that Louis XIV, sovereign master in his Academy of Music, intervened personally and drew up new regulations that still further augmented the burdens of the management. It was compelled to pay, over and above what it owed already, 25,000 livres in pensions to Lulli's family, to Lalande the composer, to Bérain the designer, and even to Bontemps the King's groom of the chambers.

This "Regulation concerning the Opera" made at Versailles on the 13th of January, 1713, sanctioned the agreements arrived at between Lamotte and Campra, for their *Europe Galante,* and the management of the Opera. When there was a question of producing this work, the two authors, awake to their own value, had refused to submit to the conditions hitherto imposed on their predecessors, who had been paid a more or less considerable sum, according to their merit and renown. Lamotte and Campra, as new authors, found themselves offered a ridiculous amount, but they refused, and thanks to the good offices of persons of influence, they ultimately concluded with the manager an arrangement which had the weight of a law during a great part of the last century, after having been, in addition, confirmed by the regulation of Louis XIV : One hundred livres for each performance to each author for the ten first nights, fifty for each following performance up to the twentieth. Counting from that one as far as Opera ballets were concerned, and from the thirtieth for lyric tragedies, the work became the property of the Academy ; if, however, it did not last through the three periods fixed above, the authors were simply paid *pro ratâ* : such was the first stage of author's rights.

* * *

On the morrow of Louis XIV's death, fresh letters-patent granted at Vincennes on the 2nd of December, 1715, hand over to the Duke d'Antin the supreme control of the Opera, which then falls—and for many a long day—under the domain of the nobility. It was the first beginning of the Regency, hailed by this flattering cry, "Hurrah for the Regent who would rather go the Opera than to Mass!" A joyous time of parties devoted to gallantry, choice suppers, and open air festivities, like

those in which the Duke d'Orléans sees himself robbed of the Souris by the Duke de Richelieu, to whose fancy for his own daughter, Mademoiselle de Valois, he had shewn himself unfavourable. And when this abduction had been carried out in the midst of a rustic entertainment organised expressly by Thévenard, who was a favourite of the Souris, the Regent, without more ado, passed from song to dance, and substituted for the chorus-singer the ballet-girl Émilie Dupré.

It was the Regent, it is often said, who conceived the idea of having masked balls given at the Opera. He did, in fact, establish them by an order of the 31st of December, 1716, decreeing that they should take place three times a week, starting from Martinmas, the 11th of November, until the end of the Carnival; but in that he did but regulate the exclusive privilege for balls granted to the Opera by his gracious Majesty on the 3rd of January, 1713. Louis XIV, notwithstanding the scruples of his tardy piety, had authorised this institution to cover the expenses occasioned by the building of the mansion destined for the management of the Opera in the Rue Saint-Nicaise, a mansion which always bore the name of the *Magazine,* and the expenses of which were thus defrayed out of the ball receipts : once the contractor paid off, the mansion became royal property, so that the present made by Louis XIV to his Academy singers was paid for by the public that rushed eagerly to the masked balls. The Opera-house adjoining the Palais-Royal, the Regent could pass straight from his own apartments into the ball-room, and thus did he go there several times, on rising from table, a trifle overcome with wine. At the very first ball, as far as that goes, the Councillor of State, Rouillé, appeared there tipsy, because such was his pleasure, he said, and the Duke de Noailles let himself be seen there in the same condition, apparently to pay his court to the Regent.

It must be admitted that spectators like these, who swaggered about at the theatre with as little decency as they did in the ball-room, would have been ill-fitted to preach abstinence and restraint to the singers. A curious crowd was this Opera public in the time of the Regency, when these so-called amateurs were wont to leave the tavern to come, and abandon themselves in the open theatre to all sorts of frolics, considered

in good taste in those days, when it was necessary to place sentinels in the wings to keep off the noble lords and petty abbés, who passed straight from the side balconies on to the stage. Nearly every day there was a performance, disorderly scenes took place either around the theatre or within it, the officers of the royal household and the courtiers claiming to have the right of entry without payment, and of forcing their way into the actresses' rooms at their own will and pleasure.

And the authors, who hitherto had been entitled to their place in the pit, was it to honour them that they were transferred to the amphitheatre, or in order that the police might keep better watch on them, prevent them from hissing, from caballing against their fellow-authors' pieces, as they habitually did, when they were hidden in the midst of the pit? One day, the Count de Talleyrand, MM. de Montmorillon, Gineste, and other "bloods" try to break through the guard, sword in hand, to be present at a rehearsal : several are wounded, Gineste is killed. Another time, the Abbés Hourlier and Barentin overwhelm M. de Fieubet with abuse; they were about to come to blows, when the guard separates them, and carries off the riotous Abbés to Fort l'Évêque. After a fortnight in the lock-up, the same Abbés, assisted by a third, come and take their places in the balcony, close to the stage, and there fall to singing at the top of their voices, louder than the actors. And what do they sneeringly reply, when they are arrested and interrogated afresh? That the theatre was intended for the purpose, and that if there is a place in the world where one ought to sing, it is the Opera.

This public was often uncontrollable, and the performance was frequently interrupted by quarrels or fights, which the forty French Guards on service had much trouble to put down. It was an incessant exchange of sarcasms between the spectators in the pit, and those in the gallery, unless they chanced to unite against the occupants of the balconies; daily skirmishes, wherein Court nobles, officers, dandies, and abbés contended as to who should display the greatest turbulence and wit. The spectators, standing in the pit, were not easily expelled, and profited by their position to jeer at whatever face or costume displeased them. They even constituted themselves judges of conflicts arising in other parts of the house. One



day a sprightly abbé, escorting two ladies with their charms freely displayed, gets pointed out to him the Duke de Noailles' box, and takes possession of it, in face of the astonished audience; far from blaming his behaviour, they envied him. In the middle of the first act, a lively altercation arises in this quarter; it is the Marshal de Noailles, who has arrived with his party, and attempts to turn out the ladies and the abbé : the latter resists and the public takes part in the dispute, as noisily as the principals themselves. Thereupon, the Abbé rises and making a sign for silence : "Gentlemen," he says, "be our judges : here is his Excellency the Marshal de Noailles, who has never captured a place in his life, and wants to capture mine to-day. Ought I to surrender?" "No, no," they shout on all sides. The Marshal insists, he is hissed, and finally forced to beat a retreat. Another evening, a fight begins between two spectators about Mademoiselle Asselin, the dancer : they go outside, cross swords, and one of them falls dead : it was a Dutch officer come on a pleasure trip to Paris.

Public, artists, and managers, were all tarred with the same brush. Now and then, however, the last-named, though no worse than the others, were not careful to see that their doors and windows were shut, before indulging in their pranks, with the result that the authorities found themselves compelled to safeguard morality, and, if only for form's sake, to take rigorous measures. Such was the case of the luckless Gruer, appointed manager of the Opera, after Destouches had for a space of two years succeeded Francine, and almost immediately dismissed for a little indoor affair, not without a touch of the ludicrous. One fine June day, in 1731, he was entertaining in the "Magazine" of the Opera, a few amateurs, among them old Campra, and two or three artists, a dancer, the Camargo, and two singers, Mesdemoiselles Pélissier, and Duval du Tillet, the elder, popularly dubbed *the Bull,* or *the Constitution,* because she was credited with being the daughter of Cardinal Bentivoglio, the promoter of the Civil Constitution of the clergy; for symmetry, the younger Mademoiselle Duval du Tillet was called *the Brief.* It had been a hot day, and the ladies having drunk a little more than usual, and being very hot after their skipping and dancing,

made no ado about reducing their costume to a vanishing point.

Unluckily the windows of the room, brilliantly lit up, had been left open, with the consequence that the numerous occupants and neighbours of the Opera "Magazine" had a free view of a pleasing and piquant spectacle. The story soon got abroad, and the King was the first to laugh at the joke; nothing unpleasant, then, would have resulted for Gruer, had he not had two partners, Count de Saint-Gilles, and President Lebœuf, with whom he was on bad terms : the pair posed as champions of outraged morality, and succeeded in getting Gruer dismissed. But there are such things as just requitals in this world. Hardly had they got rid of Gruer when Mariette, the dancer, surnamed *the Princess,* on account of her relations with Prince de Carignan, the inspector general of the Opera, took it into her head to ask them for a double salary, to which she was not entitled. They had the audacity to refuse : their short-lived appointment was at once revoked.

* * *

The Pélissier, who cut such a brilliant figure at Gruer's little festivity, was one of the richest actresses in Paris, thanks to the bounty of the Dutch Jew, Lopez Dulis. She was a clever singer to boot, who knew how to get great effects out of a voice of small volume, and who did not spare herself on the stage; after the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur, she had the singular fancy to buy all her theatrical wardrobe in the lump, at the cost of forty thousand crowns, and out of these costumes, to wear a fresh one every day, when playing Folly in Destouches' *Le Carnaval et la Folie.* She led the life of a princess, keeping open house, and being fond of frequenting the theatres of the Fair, even subsidising a puppet-showman; very licentious, and not remarkably disinterested, she extorted heavy tributes from all her admirers, particularly from the English amateurs by whom she had been much appreciated during a runaway trip to London. At the time of her acquaintance with Dulis, she had borrowed precious trinkets from this jeweller, which she had neglected to return, and, what is more, she consoled herself for his grumblings with the society of Francœur, a musician. Dulis, having returned to the



Par un Art delicat, par un jeu patetique,
PELISSIER, vous donnez a la Scene Lyrique

M.lle PELISSIER.

Du Theatre François tous les charmes divers:
Sans vous les Opera ne sont que des Concerts.

Hague, tried to take vengeance on the faithless one; he sent an emissary to Paris, with instructions to disfigure the lady, and administer a sound thrashing to her gallant. But this worthy agent, having stupidly managed to get discovered and captured, was broken on the wheel in the Place de Grève; so too was Dulis, but in effigy only, and the same day, he celebrated his punishment by giving a princely feast at the Hague. This crime and its discovery, this dramatic trial and execution were all clear gain to the Pélissier : her shares only got higher quotations in the Paris market.

The Pélissier, on the boards, was in constant rivalry with Mademoiselle Lemaure, who possessed a magnificent voice, in the service of a mediocre intelligence, and the management of the Opera was clever enough to turn this artistic competition to account; as soon as people were out of humour with one of the two singers, may be through her taking it into her head to be off, or perhaps through her having to be temporarily sent away for disciplinary reasons, they sided with the other, exalting her so as to excite the envy or repentance of her rebellious companion.

It happened to them, however, and that more than once, to sing in the same piece, or during the same evening, for they both enjoyed a lengthy career, and the conflicts about them in the house were being constantly renewed. The Maurians and the Pelissians—so the two parties were called—had quite distinct places in the Opera pit : as soon as one of the rivals appeared on the stage, the opposite party immediately turned right-about-face, and kept their eyes fixed on the amphitheatre, while she was singing; her devotees, on the contrary, uproariously applauded her. This queer manœuvre, being repeated several times in an evening, much amused the calm and impartial part of the public, who waited for the critical moment, and who, for that matter, gallantly applauded both singers, without turning their backs on either.

The capricious Lemaure, one of whose wild freaks occurred just in time for people to jest, by analogy, at the resignation of M. de Ségur, bishop of Saint Papoul, about the bull *Unigenitus*, and the licentious Pélissier, whose excesses scandalised even the by no means prudish staff of the Opera, attained equal brilliancy by different means, for they were

unlike in all respects, the first being short and ill-made, while the second was as graceful in figure, as she was in face, but they only shone in the second rank, and neither of them could compete for the first place with Mademoiselle Antier, the pupil and successor of Marthe Le Rochois.

The latter had been received into the Opera company for the beauty of her voice, she had, in addition, a tall figure, and a commanding appearance, and she filled parts of high tragedy admirably. She remained no less than twenty-nine years at the Opera, without ever tiring the public, as much applauded at the end of her fine career as on her first appearance, when, representing Glory, in the prologue to *Armide,* the evening the Marshal de Villars had appeared at the Opera after the battle of Denain, she rose suddenly from her car, to offer a crown to the glorious victor. Moreover, the great singer was very well treated by the Court and the princes of the blood : her well-timed compliment had gained her a superb diamond snuff-box; on her marriage, she received another, this time of gold, from the Queen, with Her Majesty's portrait, and the Count and Countess de Toulouse presented her with valuable jewels, and silver plate for her visit to Rambouillet.

* * *

During the first thirty years of the century, at a time when no genius of the first order presided over the lyric stage, the art of dancing had curiously extended its domain to the detriment of that of song. Over and above ballets properly so called, the public shewed a marked taste for certain works in one act, half song, half dance, linked together by no other bond than a general appellation : *Fragments*—— *Fêtes*—— or *Amours,* and forming under this ingenious rubric, what, later on, people frankly called "spectacles coupés." These divers acts, of different subjects, were of singular help in the arrangement of performances, so much did the public, charmed doubtless by the variety of the costumes and scenery, appear to approve of this system of mosaic applied to the theatric art : in reality it was a striking sign of decadence and poverty of invention in authors. Quinault was no longer available, alas! nor Lulli either, and Rameau was not yet to the fore.



LOUIS PECOUR

Pensionnaire du Roy, Compositeur des Balets de l'Academie Royalle de Musique, et Maitre a Danser de Mad.e la Duchesse de Bourgogne.

As far as that goes, such was the fancy of Parisians for dancing accompanied by songs, that Rameau himself, along with his big lyric tragedies, like *Hyppolite et Aricie, Castor et Pollux, Dardanus,* etc., will also be fated to write many opera-ballets : *Les Indes Galantes, Les Talents Lyriques, Les Fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour.* And such was the variety of his genius, such his wealth of imagination that the same man, after having wedded pathetic and sublime music to heroic subjects, invented for his opera-ballets, delicious dance tunes, of a grace that charm the ear to this day.

Opera, both in musical declamation, and in music for dancing, made enormous progress under the quickening influence of Rameau. Truth of expression, melodic accent, variety of rythms and movements, dramatic force of recitative, attained under his pen a degree of pathos already almost equal to Gluck's, and if the material composition of the orchestra was not essentially modified, the genius of Rameau was able to give it unlooked-for developments, and to discover, instinctively, magnificent effects of instrumentation.

To every eclipse of the lyric drama, corresponds a brilliant period of choregraphy in the history of our Opera, and this singular phenomenon, striking as it was at the beginning of the last century, under the Regency, was not less so at the outset of our own, under the Restoration. There rose up then, as though for the good of the art, a series of dancers of the first rank, and thanks to their original talent, the ballet took new life : it abandoned the grave and formal air in which no change had been made since the day when Lulli had ventured to bring female dancers on the stage. It was in *Le Triomphe de l'Amour,* in 1681, and people long remembered how charmed and surprised had been spectators, accustomed to seeing male dancers only, by the bold introduction of four young women, Mesdemoiselles La Fontaine, Roland, Le Peintre, and Fernon! The end of the seventeenth century had seen excellent artists in dancing : Beauchamps, whom Lulli consulted about his ballets, Dolivet, an admirable mime, the vigorous and agile Balon, lastly Pécourt, the prince of ballet-dancers at that time, one of the favourites of Ninon de l'Enclos, in whose company Marshal de Choiseul caught him one day, dressed in a

costume of military cut : "And how long have you been an officer, Pécourt? What rank do you hold?" "Marshal, I command a corps wherein you have long served."

* * *

Many women had also gained distinction alongside these elegant mimes : Mademoiselle de Subligny, remarkable for the nobility and grace of her dancing, Mademoiselle Carville, splendid in sweeping and stately measures, but above all Mademoiselle Prévost, who excelled in quick and airy dancing, and who was the first to dance steps set to a brilliant violin solo in François Rebel's *Ulysse,* in 1703.

Mademoiselle de Subligny, the daughter of a French actor, was one of the first dancers to conceive the idea of going to London, to make a rapid fortune, and when she set out for England, she provided herself with letters of introduction from Thiriot and the Abbé Dubois to Locke, who thus became, in the jocular phrase of Fontenelle, the Subligny's *man of business.* The lady, like all theatrical people in her day, had curious manners. One fine May night, in 1735, a vehement dispute arose in the house in which she lodged, between herself and her neighbour on the floor above, Louis Francœur, one of the twenty-four royal fiddlers, who had been giving a supper to two lady cousins, whom their husbands came to escort home about midnight. Mademoiselle de Subligny and her companion, Mademoiselle Bailleul, affirmed that they had been grossly insulted, not to speak of the noisy dancing and fiddling that had been going on over their heads; but the only clear fact was that one of the ladies entertained by Francœur, as well as her husband, had had their fine clothes drenched by a shower-bath. Pure water, affirmed the dancer; something else, retorted the complainants. It was for the police officer to settle the dispute : which he did on the spot with a decision against the Subligny.

But none of these male dancers, brilliant though they were, had acquired renown comparable with that which the great Dupré was about to gain; none of these female dancers, applauded in their time as they were, had reached the height of glory of the Sallé, of the Camargo, whose names were destined to pass from age to age. Up to the begin-



MADEMOISELLE SUBLIGNY DANSANT A L'OPÉRA

ning of the last century, the art of dancing consisted chiefly of beautiful attitudes, harmonious movements of the body and arms, with the result that there was no very great difference between the dancers and the singers : this can be tested by a glance at the Maupin's portrait, which does not sensibly differ from the Subligny's. Legs, however, gradually lost their stiffness, and dancing acquired freer scope; Mademoiselle Prévost had already displayed less stateliness and more ease; but it was reserved for the Camargo to introduce into her steps a suppleness and lightness that were quite astonishing in those days.

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By what bold stroke did the young Anne Cupis de Camargo emerge from the rank of supernumeraries, to which she had been relegated by the jealous Prévost, after the striking success of her first appearance in *les Caractères de la Danse?* By the morrow the name of Camargo had become famous. People rushed to the doors of the Opera to admire and applaud the new wonder. Forthwith Mademoiselle Prévost, alarmed at this triumph, had had her budding rival put back among the rank-and-file of the ballet; but one fine day that Dumoulin was not in his place at the moment the orchestra gave him his cue, the young ballet-girl bounds forward to the centre of the stage, improvises a step, dances with spirit and fantasy in the midst of the continuous applause of the public. This success widened the breach between the new-comer and Mademoiselle Prévost, who, from that day forward, refused to instruct her, and even to let her dance a measure at the invitation of the Duchess de Berry; but from that day also, it was predicted that the Camargo would soon take the foremost place. She finally attained it, thanks to the excellent lessons of Blondy; soon she added stateliness and vigour of execution to grace and gaiety, her natural gifts; she was of an incomparable lightness, and out of the various styles of her teachers she had contrived to create one of her own, wherein were reproduced and carried to still further perfection, Blondy's noble air in stately measures, Mademoiselle Prévost's piquancy in purely graceful *entrées*.

Mademoiselle Camargo had joined the Opera in 1726, at the same

time as Mademoiselle Petitpas, who, to some extent, created the line of "chanteuse légère," and as the Pélissier, when the latter's husband having come to grief, as manager of the Opera-house at Rouen, had disbanded his company, from which the Paris Opera had at once chosen these three principal performers. Mademoiselle Sallé, her able rival, had made her first appearance before her, and was chiefly remarkable for her stately elegance. She was quite the equal of the Camargo, and the public, in its hesitating admiration, rewarded both with equal applause in their different styles. How often have these pretty verses of Voltaire not been quoted?

« Ah! Camargo, que vous êtes brillante!
Mais que Sallé, grands Dieux, est ravissante!
Que vos pas sont légers, et que les siens sont doux! »

But mademoiselle Sallé was tormented by innovating ideas. At the same time that she wanted to substitute art and reason for caprice in the matter of costume, she essayed to replace the *divertissements, passe-pied, musettes,* etc., following one another with invariable regularity, by a ballet of intrigue; she had the germ in her head of the first notion of ballet-pantomime, of the genuine ballet of action that was only to reach complete maturity thirty years later, with the dramatic creations of Noverre. And as at Paris she met with nothing but obstacles to all improvement, she departed for London, provided with a letter of introduction from Fontenelle, to the *chargé d'affaires* of France in England. There she received the best of welcomes at Covent Garden, in company with the dancer Maltaire; she mimed and danced there two ballets of her own composing, a *Pygmalion* and an *Ariane,* arranged and costumed in accordance with her own peculiar ideas; then enjoyed the sly pleasure of acquainting French amateurs with the great success she was gaining in England. She had a long letter written to the *Mercure* wherein the boldness and success of her innovations were warmly vaunted, wherein she was particularly extolled for having ventured to impersonate Galatea, without panier, petticoat, bodice, or monumental head-gear, but in a simple muslin robe draped in the fashion of an antique statue.

The Camargo, too, tries innovation in her own way. In 1730, a



Fidele aux loix de la Cadence M.^LLE CAMARGO. *Originale dans ma danse*
Je forme au gré de l'art les pas les plus hardis. *Je puis le disputer aux Balons, aux Blondis*

memorable date, the year Mademoiselle Prévost retired from the stage, the new-comer ventured to attempt the first *entrechats*, but with four movements of the foot only. And was it not she also, who, having thought fit to put on tights, for her *petits sauts,* found herself laughed at by her comrades for her pains? But some time afterwards a police ordinance forbade any actress or dancer to appear on the stage without tights.

After the Camargo had retired from the stage, a passionate controversy arose on the same subject. No, said one side, tights she never wore; but her mode of dancing was so decent that she never needed them. Yes, she did, maintained the others. A wager was laid, and application was made to the dancer herself to solve the dispute : She was found in complete retirement, with half a dozen tabbies round her, and her answer was that she had always worn tights, what was more, that their adoption on the stage dated from the moment of her most brilliant successes.

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From the Rouen theatre also, like his three comrades, came the dancer Dupré, a superb fellow, tall and well favoured, admirably shaped, who was to attain perfection in his art, and fill with his name all the first half of the century as Vestris in his turn filled the second half. The latter, however, did not banish his master from men's minds, and Dorat, in his poem *la Déclamation,* holds the balance even between them.

"Lorsque le grand Dupré, d'une marche hautaine,
Orné de son panache avançait sur la scène,
On croyait voir un dieu demander des autels
Et venir se mêler aux danses des mortels.
Dans tous ses déploiements sa danse simple et pure
N'était qu'un doux accord des dons de la nature.
Vestris, par le brillant, le fini de ses pas,
Nous rappelle son maître et ne l'éclipse pas."

This great dancer had long served as a master in every sense to his comrade Carville, but the latter was not cruel to Gruer, Keeper of the Royal Treasury, the opera-manager who had been dismissed for his supper-party escapade, and the pair were seen on a sly trip to the

"Arbre des Grâces," while the ballet-dancer was kicking his heels in the lady's boudoir and preparing a lecture for her return. In the end, the dancer lost patience and no longer refused his valuable lessons to Mademoiselle Henry the younger, the acknowledged mistress of the Comte d'Estaing; thereupon the Carville, stung by jealousy, came and watched at her old lover's door, after seeing her comrade enter. To get rid of this spying they hit upon the plan of dressing up a big lanky fellow in Dupré's clothes; the Carville, on seeing him came out, rushed after him, and the little Henry, the course now clear, runs to the Count's to reward his tender impatience, bewailing the precious time lost by her dancing lessons with the great Dupré.

The adventure soon got wind and what smiles there were, what winking and whispering that evening, when the Count d'Estaing appeared in the Opera balcony, while the three heroes of the adventure, the Carville, ashamed and confused, the little Henry demure and sly, Dupré full of glee and self-importance, were skipping about two paces from him! He put a good face on it, but bade farewell to the faithless one who quickly found consolation in the tender interest of a foreign Crœsus.

What numberless points of contact there were between the nobility and the ballet! And on the death of Adrienne Lecouvreur, what strange rumours were current respecting the charming tenor Tribou, the successor of Muraire and the predecessor of Jéliotte as a first alto singer, the creator of Hippolytus and Castor in the two masterpieces of Rameau! "The death of Mademoiselle Lecouvreur," writes Barbier, "has happened in rather peculiar circumstances. Three or four months ago it is said that an abbé (Bouret, sent to the Bastille for his share in the business) wrote to the Lecouvreur to the effect that he had orders to poison her, some say by means of a bouquet, others with biscuits, but that pity induced him to give her this warning. This story is being now revived, and people suspect no less a personage than the Duchess de Bouillon, the daughter of Prince Jacques Sobieski, who dotes on Tribou, of the Opera, though the Count de Clermont is her recognized lover. But the latter must put up with it. They say that Tribou was passionately attached to the Lecouvreur and that hence the quarrel."



M.^LLE SALLÉ

Maîtresse de cet Art que guide l'Harmonie,
Je peins les Passions, j'Exprime la Gaieté;
Je joins des Fus brillans au jeu de mon Génie.
Les Graces, la Nature a la fournie,
Sans effacer l'aimable Modestie,
Qui de mon Sexe augmente la Beauté.

Vers inconnu paluit Deus Virg. Aenaid I.1

I know her now, the sylvan Goddess true,
Aeneas saw her grace in such disguise,
Delusion van 'her Graze, her sky Mien,
Her cry ey dudorse Beauty? Queen.
But soon the laughing Nymphs the fraud profan'd,
For they to grace her feast had Talle Dreft'd.

It was then an endless *chassé-croisé* between singers and great ladies, dancing girls and financiers, songstresses and men of quality; public curiosity was on the alert to find out exactly on what day, at what hour changes were made in these connections known to everybody. This "swapping" now and then took place in ceremonious fashion. Thus it was with the Count de Clermont, when he gave a costly supper to inaugurate his intimacy with the Camargo and to cede his own rights over the little Quoniam to the young Prince de Conti, his nephew, recently wedded to a Princess d'Orléans.

This ceremony was not to the taste of the Dowager duchess d'Orléans nor to that of the Duke d'Orléans, and it was rumoured that the Quoniam had been shut up in a convent; but to give the lie to this she first shewed herself at the Opera where the young "bloods" welcomed her with applause, then, at the close of the performance, she repaired to the Tuileries, where the crowd made a lane for her to pass through and saluted her with courteous gestures. The Camargo, on her side, soon quitted the Academy and took up her residence at the Château de Berny, a dependency of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, of which the Count de Clermont was the worthy abbot : when he had been promoted to this important benefice it had been said all over Paris that the King, to separate him the more effectually from his mistress would give him this Abbey and that of Montmartre to Camargo.

Monotony and boredom were to bring about what the King had not been able to effect and break off this absorbing connection. At the end of seven or eight years, and almost by common accord, the Count de Clermont carried off Mademoiselle Leduc, another dancer, from the President des Rieux, the son of the great Samuel Bernard, who had got deeply into debt on her account, while the Camargo, graciously agreed to help the President squander the rest of his fortune; then, when she was tired of him, she cast in lots with Jéliotte the tenor, and the President, ever faithful to the ballet, returned to his old friend the Mariette, to whom he sent twelve magnificent silver dishes as a pledge of his renewed attachment.

In the midst of this shameless licence, Mademoiselle Sallé was distin-

guished for a dignity of behaviour to which was paid the homage of verse.

« De tous les cœurs et du sien la maîtresse,
Elle allume des feux qui lui sont inconnus.
De Diane c'est la prêtresse
Dansant sous les traits de Vénus. »

"The portrait of Mademoiselle Sallé is about to be published," was one day announced. "There will, be four lines of verse at the bottom, wherein her virtue will, of course, not be forgotten. This virtue counts among the wonders of the Opera, which are the Lemaure's voice, Dupré's knee, and the Camargo's leg." A mock virtue that is somewhat unmasked in the dancer's own verses—for she was a poetess, too—in which she chanted the praises, above all of Iris, Chloris and the like, to the exclusion of Adonis.

* * *

"When an Opera girl has only three lovers at once"—ran a squib bearing the fictitious signature of Mariette—"there is nothing to be said, she needs one each for pleasure, honour and interest." And elsewhere, "The opera is a Peru for the damsels who join it, notwithstanding that their salaries are very low; there are some among them without salary at all, or who hand it over to the manager to be allowed to remain." What a pitiful sum, in fact, was a salary of one thousand or twelve hundred livres for Mademoiselle Saint-Germain whose boudoir Crozat, the financier, carpeted with bank notes, for Mademoiselle Coupée to whom the Duc de Gramont made over houses and immense tracts of land close to the Barrière to Clichy, for Mademoiselle Poulette whose house was burnt down by an admirer in order that he might offer her one more worthy of her beauty!

"The ladies of the Opera." says this pamphlet again, "have shared the Government among them. One has the War Office, and another the Department of Finance, a third Public Worship, and a fourth the management of Foreign Affairs." Was it not Mesdemoiselles Rabon, Petitpas, Pélissier and Du Rocher who thus governed France and formed a fair ministry with which it was wise not to fall out?

To continue our extracts from this blabbing pamphlet. "The ladies of the Opera have nowadays more precious stones than they formerly had false ones. To lend them any is to run a great risk. The loss of them is not always the only consequence." This alludes to the misadventure of the Jew Lopez Dulis with the Pélissier. "People ought not to be allowed to remain at the Opera after fifty : is it not ridiculous to try and represent Venus at that age?" An allusion to Mademoiselle Antier. "It is still more ridiculous to try and dance when you are a grandmother." A hit at Mariette, who was still dancing alongside her daughter. "Nothing does actresses more harm than having children. It isn't the married actresses who have the most. The nieces and sisters of the unmarried ones are generally their daughters : a fact concealed not for their reputation's sake, but so as not to appear old." Great facts common to all times, all stages, and examples of which, from this eighteenth century to our own day, would be too numerous for quotation.

ADOLPHE JULLIEN.

(To be continued.)





THE CLOSE OF AN IDYLL

"A poor sequestered stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish——
And the big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase."
(As You Like It.)



They had been lovers all the autumn through; and now, this late October morning, they were walking together, a lonely and faithful pair —she a slim young doe, he a noble "stag of ten" with coat of russet-dun—walking on under the yellow trees which lent the shelter of their last few leaves : lovers still. The lordly stag had paid his court to no other doe; he had remained with her, and her alone. The forest of Fontainebleau had guarded their constant love—and so they ambled on that morning, through a deep clearing, their young fawns bounding ahead of them.



How beautiful the forest was! The sun was rising in a brilliant sky; under its bright beams the trees which had been but yellow, now shone with transparent gold. Perfect silence still brooded on the scene. Was it not an enchanted forest?—No! Hark! A trumpet call rings out to raise the echoes. And the fine stag stops in anxious surprise. He lifts his head, and eagerly sniffs the air. He uneasily paws the ground, drawing deep breaths, as though he could smell whence danger threatens. A second blast of the horn is heard nearer than before. The doe and her fawns vanish in the thicket. He lingers yet a while; then he lowers his head to the very ground and flies away headlong in the opposite direction to that taken by the doe.

Twenty minutes later a pack of hounds appears on the scene, and without an instant's hesitation moves forward, giving tongue, on the track of the noble hart.

Once before he had escaped as by a miracle, after a four hours' run, and at night-fall, panting and weary, had found his partner down by the ash-trees in the middle of the forest. Why should he not do the same to-day?

A signal to advance is sounded; horsemen and carriages turn into the forest-rides, and at this very time, far, far away in the heart of the wood, the young doe and her two fawns have found a couch on a carpet of moss. She watches her young at play with a slow mysterious gaze—she lies at ease, not far from their usual covert, waiting for her handsome and devoted consort. In her day-dream the gentle creature recalls many a sweet and tender hour of the past. Still, she shudders as she hears the dead leaves rustle and fall, she remembers the horrors of last year!—— The fall of the leaf! Autumn! It was indeed the season of their loves, but it was also a season of anguish : the dreadful season when they were hunted and driven. And the hours creep on, and he does not come.

Again the blast of a trumpet wakes the forest echoes. The slender doe starts up. She recognizes the dreadful sound! The little fawns prick their sharp ears and stand alert, ready to fly, but keeping close to their mother. Then silence reigns in the woods once more.

But now a low, dull murmur comes nearer each instant, and louder. The doe is off to the top of a hillock of large boulders whence she can gaze afar. And out there, in the middle of a wide, ploughed field a splendid buck is leaping, galloping away, with amazing swiftness. She cannot be sure what stag it may be, and her heart begins to throb with fear. Now the stag has disappeared in the dense grove, but a clamorous blast of the horn thrills the forest, and she sees a pack of hounds plunging breathless across the glade. Soon after come the horsemen at full gallop."

"Alas!" she thinks, "he is done for!—But who, who is *he?*"

And thus thinking to herself she is about to go down the slope to see the hapless victim more closely ere he falls a prey to these monsters —men, as it would seem. Then, as she reaches the end of the avenue, she knows him, flecked with slaver, his eyes bloodshot—her consort, her noble "stag of ten." He can run no further, the dogs are at his heels.

Rigid with horror the doe stands motionless; her two fawns have bounded over the rocks and disappeared. Now the horsemen are passing by, shouting to encourage the dogs—and then all is still again.

But as the stag passed near her he saw her. The young doe felt his gaze rest upon her, so full of sorrowful meaning that it paralysed her powers. Now she recovers her senses and rushes in among the hounds. She can easily catch him up, for by this time, alas! the noble creature can hardly drag himself along. But seeing his beloved partner at his side the brave beast pulls himself up, and standing at bay, confronts the foe. After ripping up five or six, after defending himself fiercely, he simply stands still, weary but scornful, paying no further heed to the angry, yelping pack. His muzzle drips with blood-stained foam, and large tears are rolling from his eyes. Perhaps the handsome creature is thinking of the verdant covert which he will never see again.

The dogs, half maddened by the sight of the stag's blood, have been got into the leashes again. The stag is to be allowed a rest so as to prolong the delights of the hunt. But it is in vain that the keepers try to drive away the doe, she returns each time to her lord.

The chief huntsman, thinking presently that the game has had a long



enough reprieve, is about to whip him up, but the noble beast, gathering all his strength, leaps wildly into the midst of the huntsmen, and sets off again, at a heavy pace. Ah, that fearful chase! that last, agonising run for life!—torture worse than death! At every step he stumbles, blood trickles from his mouth; his young partner follows him with gasping breath—and still he runs, he doubles, he turns—in and out among the carriages, the horses, the riders; he aims at a certain goal. He clearly understands that death lies before him, and his last hope is to die on the spot where he has lived happy.

In front of him lies a pool hemmed in by rocks. He has thrown the dogs off the scent and gained on them by a few minutes—He rushes into the water to refresh his bleeding limbs; the doe follows him. He cannot drink, he has not breath enough. Trembling like a reed in the wind the noble beast casts a long heart-broken look at his mate; his eyes entreat, command her—and she too looks at him with that slow, tender, mysterious gaze which is peculiar to gazelles and Indians. What are they saying to each other in that speechless language?

Hoarse barking is heard close at hand; the stag starts once more. Now he flies straight onward like an arrow from a bow, his head in a line with his straining neck, his eyes fixed. On they go—behind them the frantic yelping pack, and behind them again the smiling, self-satisfied men; men in red coats—as red as the blood they are eager to shed.

The horn sounds the "Mort," and the forest echoes shudder as they repeat it. A low knoll rises in front of the victims who now make painful way. He, however, collects himself for a last vigorous effort; he bounds over the mound and down into the clearing as though fired from a gun; then, with a last effort he leaps the fence of young fir-trees, and falls dead in the home of his heart, on the spot where he was happy, in the midst of the coppice which sheltered his love. He is dead! and she, strange to say, the gentle slender doe is alive, while he, strong and masterful, is fallen!

The horsemen come up; the ladies on horseback and the carriages make their way into the glade. Soon a knot has collected in eager discussion. The fate of the doe is to be decided. "We must kill her,"

says the Master of the Hunt. "There are too many of them."—And she falls under the knife like a brave doe as she is. She does not move or shun the stroke, nor wince at the flash of the blade. No; and if her eyes closed as she fell dead on her partner's body, it was not from fear, but to hide her tears.

There they stand, huntsmen and huntswomen, talking and laughing by the side of the dead, while the neighbouring trees—who cannot weep—shed their leaves like tears. And now the evening breeze rises in a mournful sigh, for the leaves murmur as they fall :

"They loved all through the autumn!"

LUCY G. DE MONTGOMERY.





NORINE [*]

SECOND LETTER

To Monsieur Prosper Arribas, Officiating Curé at Rocaillet.

I

5th September, 1887.

"Call Mirette, my dear Arribas, and read, both of you, very attentively this second letter of mine. *Epistola secunda ad Prosperum Arribassum presbyterum*——

"About a fortnight ago, the sudden appearance of a goldfinch among the buildings of the Palace of the Institute caused great commotion. The thing occurred at No. 25, Quai Conti, in a little, narrow, solitary court-yard, hidden in the shadow of the tall dome, a pretty little court-yard, kept well brushed and watered, where scrupulous care maintains, along the walls, plants that climb up and up, and in the height of summer, fall down again on all sides in pretty bunches of blossom.

"The windows of my rooms—and very tiny, low rooms they are—are embellished for several months in the year by a frame of foliage,

(*) See *Art and Letters*, for July, 1888. Vol. I, p. 5,

mingled with spots of blue and red, and, when my brain has poured out on a sheet of paper its meagre daily stock of ideas, with my elbows on the window bar I pass, wrapped in delicious idleness, long hours of reverie. My soul then takes wing to the native country-side, so deeply imprinted on it—the country-side that comes back to me in the slightest bend of my thoughts, the country-side that, more often than not, when I venture to write, commands me, and that I obey.

"One night I had been lingering over a sentence that I was obstinately wanting to come out well, and that persisted in coming out ill. The right turn, the right expression were not there. Harassed, knocked about by a struggle in which I had not had the last word—it was literally a word that it was a question of discovering, of having—I threw down my pen, that useless arm of mine, and leant my elbows on the window sill. My head was burning. I had a quite distinct feeling of a ball of fire rolling about in my skull with dizzy rapidity. When would this ball of fire that threatened to burn up all my intellectual mechanism for me cease its fearful whirling? Oh! that terrible, atrocious brain-work!

"The Institute clock over my head, struck two. I listened, in a sort of trance; then I tried to follow the two notes that sounded against the universal silence, spreading out on the Mazarin Palace, and afar over the sleeping city. Miserable human brain, too fragile long to endure the fever of the mind without bursting! Suddenly I felt less disturbed, and refreshed as it were. Was it the clock in the dome that had relieved me of the stress of an effort, wherein others, more eager than myself, have lost their reason, even their life? No, Arribas, no. It was the glimpse of that trimly kept, leaf-embowered court-yard of No. 25, Quai Conti, a genuine convent court-yard, that I shall henceforth call, to distinguish it from the three others, 'goldfinch court.'

"Picture to yourself the moon, all slim and white, alone in the heavens, without a single star for company, plunging her beams along the verdure-clad walls. The blossoms, shrunk up, almost closed, were just distinguishable, here and there; the leaves of the clematis, convolvulus, and sweet pea, were spread full out, drinking in, after the heat of the day, the pale light that brought them the dew. At intervals, a breeze

came down from the topmost roofs, lifted the movable curtain of intertwined plants, and shook it with a gentle rustling sound.

"By what delicate odours I was conscious of being surrounded in that clear, ideal night, a night worthy to be compared with the nights in my own country-side! Half intoxicated, becoming in thought a child again, I fancied myself still at my uncle the Abbé's, and, by a sort of kindly mirage, the walls that rose like a rampart in front of me represented the walls of Camplong parsonage, walls so old and rotten that they would long since have fallen, had it not been for the sturdy ivy supporting them.

"I was wandering through the Cévennes country with you, my friend, with my uncle, with Prudence, with others whom I loved down in those parts, and who, alas! are no more, when three strokes clanged noisily. Three o'clock! I rub my eyes. No, I was not at the parsonage with my uncle, with Prudence, with you; I was at the Institute, at the Institut de France, as it is written up over the entrance of the Palace.

"I fell to reflecting. How came it that I, all insignificant as I was, arriving in Paris with sabots on my feet, and on my mind too, had edged myself into this venerable establishment, where so many illustrious men have laboured, and are still labouring every day, the only place in Paris where you inhale the delightful odour of books in every corner? I was ashamed, and I resolved to turn to at the work again to-morrow, to begin again on the morrow the tangled conflict of idea with expression, to fight this good fight till death—— Quite so, but the deuce of it all was, Arribas, that the morrow was the day the goldfinch appeared.

II

"It was ten o'clock in the morning. For some minutes, I had heard curious sounds in the court. First indistinct chattering, then shrieks of laughter, then piercing cries, with these words intermingled: 'There he is! There he is!' I was planning the second act of a rustic drama that I had long had on the stocks, and, to my great annoyance, this unusual noise kept breaking every moment the threads by which I was trying my best to connect one scene with another. I got up in a rage

to put an end to the din, resolved, if needs were, and I was not attended to at once, to have recourse to the architect of my wing, M. Le Blanc, a most amiable man, who lives just over my head, when silence was suddenly re-established.

"I thought it must be one of those hallucinations that are occasionally brought on by work too prolonged, too absorbing, or bristling with too many difficulties, and I returned to my table. The silence continued all round me, that silence of the Institute which is like no other, the silence peculiar to a place where all sounds must be hushed in order that the mind may be left to work free. Who, as far as that goes, would care to assume the responsibility of disturbing M. Berthelot, of the Académie des Sciences, whose discoveries are an honour to the country; of interrupting M. Camille Doucet, perpetual secretary of the Académie Française, writing one of those reports of his, full of keen points, crammed with good sense, about the examinations in literature; of cutting in two an historical chapter begun by M. Wallon, perpetual secretary of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres; of preventing Viscount Delaborde, perpetual secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, from finishing off some fine study on the French school?——

"After this false alarm—for false it was, assuredly—I had set to work again, and as though, from the shaking up I had, I had gained a sudden accession of clearness, penetrating more deeply into my subject, I unwound the tangled skein of my drama, grasped all its threads, and was tying them up famously, when——

"'There he is! There he is! There he is!'

"What, again!

"I reach the window at a bound, and open it with a jerk.

"A score of people are squeezing and shoving one another across the tranquil court of No. 25, across my dear convent court, and with arms outstretched, are shouting :

"'There he is! There he is!'

"'There *who* is?' cried I in my turn, showing these excited people an ill-humoured face, with a fearful scowl, my working face.

"'The bird, the bird——'


MB. de Monvel.

"'Tis the voice of Marie, a little blind girl of eight, who sells flowers with her mother in the passage out of the Rue de Seine, a familiar occupant of our court, where, like a house-sparrow, she now and then gets a chance beakful.

"'A bird?' I ask.

"'Among the nasturtiums, sir,' screams an old woman's shrill voice.

"'Under the sill of the big window in the dome, among the trellis-work,' adds one of our Mazarin library attendants.

"'It's a canary,' declares Meslet, the Institute cabinet-maker.

"'It's a goldfinch!' affirms Henri, the Institute locksmith.

"'It's the elephant from the Jardin des Plantes,' yells a youngster in a white jacket and cap, a baker's boy from Quillet's.

"But hereupon a thin gentleman of distinguished mien cleaves his way through this crowd gaping at the lost bird.

"'Well, well! what does all this mean?'—— asks M. Le Blanc.

"These words have a magical effect. The four concierges of the Palace—all four of them are there, open-mouthed, the one from No. 23, Quai Conti, the one from No. 1, Rue de Seine, the one from No. 3, Rue Mazarine, and our own—the four concierges push back the curious crowd, which retires cursing and swearing, and shut the heavy door on their heels. At last!

"The little court has resumed its ordinary aspect. It seems to me that I appreciate and enjoy the peace of the place better now.

"I remain at my window, with a watchful eye for the least movement of the plants against the walls. The Institute locksmith fancied he detected a goldfinch among them, and the very thought is enough to keep me in panting suspense. The goldfinch is the commonest bird of our Cévennes country-side. In a second, vistas of service-trees, fig-trees, mulberry-trees, wild-briars, prickly tufts of thistles, pass before my eyes, and, on all sides, legions of finches flutter their wings and peck with their beaks. And as for the big singing finches of Les Cérisoles—you can guess, my dear Arribas, how plainly alive they seem to me, and how my thoughts straightway take wing towards yourself.

"Hullo! A bell-flower, hanging at the end of a tendril is swaying,

there, on the right hand, in the green foliage. You might fancy it to be my uncle's silver bell that we used to set going with our sturdy pulls in Camplong church. The bell-flower tinkles, it tinkles till I am inclined to bend my head, as one does at mass at the solemn moment of the Elevation of the Host. What is the meaning of it? Heavens! a red head shews an eye between the leaves, with timid discretion. It is a goldfinch! On the twig that sustains him, he stretches out one after the other his pretty little pink legs, then he spreads his wings, one after the other, just as he did his legs, with a mighty tired air. Poor little chap! Who knows whence, and how many leagues he has come? Besides, the recent yelling has perhaps given him a bit of a frightening.

"The beating of my heart is redoubled; it is like so many strokes of a hammer in my breast—— The goldfinch has seen me—— He looks at me—— He doesn't seem to be afraid—— Should he take it into his head to enter my room, what a welcome guest he would be! I burn with a desire to call him, or rather half whistle to him, by that name of my native dialect, which in my childhood was an infallible charm in the mountains of my home : '*Bêni! bêni!* come here! come here!—' I dare not. If he heard me, he might be frightened, and take wing. I content myself with admiring him, and keep still.

"All the same, I should be much surprised if this darling little bird was not born in the Cévennes like myself, if he was not from my part of the country. He has just flown from his hiding-place, as far as the sill of the big bay-window lighting the inner staircase that leads to the tribune in the lecture hall, and I can see him in all his wealth of plumage, yellow, black, red, white, and grey. An unusually brilliant ray of sunlight, enveloping him, shews him up splendidly, gives him the appearance of some big jewel, fallen from the top of the dome, fallen out of the sky. If only Viscount Delaborde, who is a better connoisseur of colours than I am, could enjoy this display of tones, brilliant and yet soft at the same time!——

"I can contain myself no longer, and, almost unconsciously, almost independently of myself, the cry for which my twelve-year-old voice comes back to me, issues from my lips : '*Bêni! Bêni! Bêni!*'

"The goldfinch looks up, flies straight towards me, enters my room.

"A few moments previously, my dear Arribas, I had burst open the window-fastening with a twist of the hand; this time I narrowly missed breaking the panes, in my eager haste to shut the window. The old Mazarin Palace groaned under the shock.

III

"Where is he? I no longer see him. He can't possibly have got away, for my room door remains closed. Can he have found his way out up the chimney? As the register is down, that is out of the question. After my first outburst of delight, I begin to be uneasy. Suppose he only just grazed the window; then, thinking better of it, returned towards the court, and, almost invisible as he would be in the shadow of the dome, made off? With an eye keen enough to pierce the very wall, I explore every nook and corner. Not a sign of the goldfinch.

"I dare not move a step. He is crouching behind a piece of furniture, or some stray volume, or the newspapers, and I have a dread of seeing him suddenly dart across the room, which is of no vast proportions, and wound himself by striking against one of the projecting beams of the ceiling——

"'The tailor, if you please, sir!' cries my servant-maid.

"'I haven't time to see him to-day.'

"And rushing to the door, which Joséphine is on the point of opening, I turn the key twice in the lock.

"'If you please, sir, he says he can't come to-morrow.'

"'Go to the deuce, both of you!'

"There was an excuse for emphasis, and no mistake. Just fancy! while Joséphine was speaking, the goldfinch, frightened without doubt, had emerged from behind a pile of books, brought that very morning by Pouillet, my binder, and he was scratching with his claws the Levant morocco of one the volumes, *Les Vrais Principes de l'Église gallicane,* by Monseigneur Frayssinous, Bishop of Hermopolis, senior chaplain to the King.

"Egad! so much the worse for the book! Let him set pretty footprints on the new binding of this work, picked up on the quays,

for the sum of one franc fifty; I freely abandon it to him. If the volume, turned over by a flap of his wing, should open, and the bird should let fall one of his tiny feathers into it, 'twill but impart a touch of lightness to these pages, for, while it has by no means the depth of the well of Holy Writ, there is a lack of lightness in this trumpery production of Monseigneur Frayssinous, Bishop of Hermopolis, senior chaplain to the King. As for that, my goldfinch—he *is* mine—is working with a will. His pearly beak, delicately brilliant, has found something to do and now he is digging away with it as fast as he can. The movements of his vermilion head, with a strip of black velvet on its crest, are ravishingly beautiful. What anger! What exasperation! I stand open-mouthed, thinking of nothing so little as of protecting *Les Vrais Principes de l'Église gallicane* from the attacks of this Cévennes goldfinch, who beyond a doubt is an ultramontane, like yourself, O awe-inspiring and charming Arribas.

"Still, at the same time that I contemplate him with admiration, and bear him no ill-will for the harm he is doing to my binder's dainty handiwork, I am beset with much apprehension. Pouillet sent me home some other volumes; there they are, duly laid out on the table, and I should be put out if this wild bird from my old home—he seems to me as wild as the Bataillo Rock—were to claw them, were to sign them with the mark of his sharp little fingers.

"For thirteen months I have been a grandfather, my friend, a 'grand' to use once more the abbreviation of our country-side, and the brain of a 'grand,' that grows weak like all the rest of him, is liable to curious aberrations. Take my own case. Would you believe that I, who am by no means an expert in regard to rare books, I who when in search of indispensable information have been wont to use the first edition to hand, have conceived the plan of forming a library for my grandson Jean, and no common library, if you please, consisting of new books, still damp from the press, of no bibliographical value, but an uncommon library, crammed with old books, printed on large paper, in limited issues, and, if it can be managed, numbered copies.

"This extravagant idea came into my head last winter, one day as I

was alone with my six-month-old Jean, and was watching him asleep in his cot. I can assure you, it filled my heart with joy to look at him, again and yet again, to admire him, to adore him. Ideas came crowding upon me : suppose he should come to be somebody? What would be his future? What trials had life in store for him? Suddenly it struck me that when he was grown up, I should no longer be by, to help him in his first struggle, in his first shouldering against other men, and a cloud dimmed my eyes. In my sudden access of emotion, did I call out? Did a cry escape from my lips? I know not. Certain it is that Jean awoke.

"There is this peculiarity about Jean, that he never cries. Is that a good sign in a child? Now and then, this utter absence of tears from a human eye, frightens me. I fear the existence of some heavy insensibility—— no, no, he is in good health, that's all.

"Now it is his turn to look at me, and he does it with all his might, gazing with his magnificent, clear, limpid eyes, like two big drops of water trickling from some woodland spring. I notice one thing especially : his breadth of brow, the bold curvature, the perfect outline of his head. I cannot resist, after bending myself double, fastening my lips on that darling little skull, all fresh as it is, and already covered with hair, where thought will soon be kindled, that vast and sacred heritage of man.

"Straightway I am concerned about fitting nourishment for this brain, that is about to bud, grow strong, speculate in all directions, discover, know, and I say to Jean, who is all attention :

"'I promise you books, good and beautiful books, for your guidance——'

"Stay, here is this terrible Bataillo goldfinch, throwing over Monseigneur Frayssinous, all riddled, scratched, torn at every seam, and turning upon Jean's La Bruyère, in four volumes, of P. Didot, senior, Chevalier of the royal order of Saint-Louis, and of Jules Didot, junior, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, an edition not now obtainable, printed expressly for the Duchess of Angoulême, 'Madame Royale,' in 1819, upon vellum with wide margin.

"'Oh, I say!'

"Uttering this cry of distress, I rushed forward, and my hand fell right on the voracious goldfinch in the hole in which he had taken refuge among the six volumes of Jean's *Esprit des Lois*. It is the delicious little edition of L. de Bure, long since out of print, from the press of Firmin-Didot, in small but very clear type, on ordinary paper, unfortunately, and Pouillet has had to size it.

IV

"'I'd got him! I'd got him!'

"Poor adorable little creature! His heart was beating terribly. At certain moments this generous heart of his, made for liberty, communicated an electric vibration to the wings that stiffened their feathers under the pressure of my fingers. I was ashamed of my cruelty, and my hand would willingly have opened. But, were I to let him go, I should only have to catch him again. Would he once more hide among the six volumes of Jean's *Esprit des Lois?* Should I capture him again as easily as before?

"'Joséphine! Joséphine!' I shouted, half-opening the door.

"'Sir!'

"'Run and buy me a cage.'

"'Where, sir?'

"'On the Quai de la Mégisserie, at the first bird-shop you come to.'

"'Is it far?'

"'No, near the Pont-Neuf, between the 'Belle Jardinière' and the Châtelet—— Quick!'

"'Do you want a big cage?'

"'Middling-sized.—Run all the way.'

"'How much am I to give for it?'

"'What they ask you.'

"'But the shop-people, sir——'

"'You weary me. Off you go!'

"'The shop-people, you know——'

"'Will you be off?'

"As though he had understood this dramatic dialogue, the goldfinch

who perhaps lived at large in this Paris, whither he had come in one flight, who at all events had lived at large, either in the hills of Orb, or in the hills of the Espinouse, gave a jump of such force, such despair, that I was within an ace of letting him go. The prospect of the prison I was preparing for him was intolerable to him, and he had made a supreme bid for freedom for the rest of his life. I could no longer feel the beating of his heart, exhausted as it was, and—who knows?—on the verge of failing altogether. The blood, in the excitement into which so many violent emotions had thrown the poor bird, had in a sort of way become extravasated in all parts of its body. It was no goldfinch I now held in my hand, but a red coal that burnt me.

"'Suppose he were to choke through my fault? to die through my fault?' thought I.

"The fear of an abominable crime made my legs give way under me, and unlocking my fingers, I sank into my arm-chair, before my writing-table.

"This fit of despondency did not last long. A minute had not elapsed before my eyes were again wandering round my room in quest of my bird, who had flown off like an arrow. I caught sight of him at last.

"He had perched himself on the upper ledge of a mirror, with a very thick and heavy oak frame, over the mantel-piece. The dull brown tint of the wood was a splendid foil to the brightness of his grey breast, that seemed to me of snowy whiteness. One thing I noticed. My goldfinch had not yet under his beak the beautiful tawny collar that graces the neck of the adults of his species, sure evidence of his extreme youth. So much the better! I should have all the longer time to keep him.

"Up there on his improvised perch, he showed off in a hundred frolicsome and coquettish little ways, turning his bright-hued head to right and left, as though better to take stock of everything round him, then prettily scratching his feathery coat with one of his tiny claws. Suddenly, his beak was stretched out towards me, and forth issued a note, lighter and more delicate than Jean's lisping, when Jean condescends to lisp. Deeply stirred, I stood stock-still, and, recollecting that the bird had understood the scraps of patois, '*Bêni! Bêni!*' I had shouted

across the court, I risked a step on the very tip of my toes, and whispered to him once more in the Cévennes dialect : '*Canto! Canto!* Sing! sing!'

" 'Tis incredible, my dear Arribas, but hardly had I repeated '*Canto!*' before this good little thing, obedient to command, half-spread his wings and his tail, and began a prelude of shrill notes, sweetly, very sweetly modulated. By degrees his voice, gaining body, rang out a deafening peal. If I still had any doubt as to the native haunt of my goldfinch, the swagger, the attitude, and the power of his song, left me henceforth no room for hesitation. Only in the Cévennes, among the wooded combes that intersect the frowning Bataillo Rock, the rugged spurs of the Espinouse chain, do the goldfinches enjoy that strength of throat, and express themselves with that vigorous eloquence. Scores of times, seeking for some agreeable diversion from natural objects, have I visited the Bird Market here; but never have I heard the like. Had but one of the birds of my own country-side been found among those hundreds of piled-up cages, and fallen to singing, I should have been brought up short at once. Every burden of our bushes, our almond trees, chestnut and fig-trees remains deep down in my ear, that would distinguish among a thousand the voice of a bullfinch, a greenfinch a linnet or a tom-tit of my native place——

" But the song grows louder and louder still, and fills my study with its volume. The goldfinch now has his wings stretched wide open, his tail spread out full, and outstretched on his stiffened legs, he looks as though he had increased in size. With his beak in full vibration, his feathers, shaking in a frenzied transport, seem as if they were singing too. The whole of the little thing's being is one harmony, that wells forth, penetrating me, carrying me out of myself, intoxicating me. I think of Les Cérisoles, my friend, I think of you, Prosper. I think of Uncle Fulcran, and with my soul overflowing—my poor artist soul that this miraculous bird has taken possession of—I let fall from my lips this verse of a psalm we have chanted together :

" '*Anima nostra sicut passer.* The soul of us is like unto a sparrow.'

" Joséphine, whom I had put down for a mighty giddy thing, a little thick-headed even, gave me the clearest proof of sense and forethought :

I had asked her to get a cage, and a cage she brought me; but she took the precaution to buy some millet, and hemp, as well, in two screws of paper. She had remembered that goldfinches want food, a thing to which I had not given the slightest thought.

"What delight I took, Arribas mine, in pouring the seeds into the zinc troughs hooked on to the bars, then in filling with the purest water, filtered water, the long bottle narrowed at one end, that drips into a low-rimmed saucer. Mirette, used to seeing the larks in the spring, and the redbreasts in the autumn, feeding themselves in your orchard at Rocaillet, setting-to of their own accord, at the feast that nature serves up untiringly to them every morning with the dawn—Mirette, I say, smiles, I am sure, at the minuteness of my attentions for this little creature that has unexpectedly tumbled among my grandson's books. Do you, who have visited Paris, explain to her that, in our streets, there pass less waggons laden with oats, with wheat, with barley, with ripe sainfoin, letting grains drop from between the bundles, than in the lanes of the parish of Rocaillet, and that here the birds would die of hunger, if those who love them did not take tender care of them.

"As for you, whose out-of-the-way ministry in the stern solitude of our Cévennes has lifted up your soul on high, and severed it from many things and many people, that still interest mine, you, I am certain, have not laughed at your friend. Who knows if you do not even find more satisfaction in seeing me fill the beak of a goldfinch than in seeing me working at some half-finished play or novel?——

"The bird has interrupted his flow of melody, and his little sharp eye follows my slightest movement. What I am doing to make his new lodging agreeable, so that he shall want for nothing, is prodigiously interesting to him. At intervals he gives out sweet chirrups, almost like articulate words. He is touched, and is giving me thanks. Fancy if he should take it into his head to lift his darling little claws from the frame of my glass, to come and peck his millet or his hemp-seed! I sprinkle a few grains on the marble of the chimney piece, where I have placed the cage, and move away with an air of indifference.

"He distrusts me, for he remains at his post, with his wings shut tight,

made smaller by a curious closing up of his feathers, his beak slightly bent towards the oak frame, against which it looks like a tiny gleaming pearl, or a glistening drop of quicksilver.

"'*Bēni! bēni!*' I cannot help crying after a long interval of waiting.

"To this word, this magic word, that he understood just now, that just now subjugated him, he lends an ear no longer.

"'*Bēni! bēni!*'

"He lifts his head, looks at me, then begins to sing. Not one distinct note, but a muffled, confused warbling. You might fancy it a refrain the singer is not sure of, and repeats timidly at the wing, before giving it forth to the public with all the means proper to augment its effect. Are there perchance comedians among the birds as among men? I'faith, the finches of our Cévennes chestnut-groves would make famous tenors, if the managers of our lyric theatres, the chapters of our cathedrals, were clever enough to get them to sign engagements.

"Sh-h-h, my goldfinch has moved; he bestirs himself, gives a flutter. What decision has he taken? Good! his two wings open. O joy! he describes a graceful parabola, and alights on the mantel-shelf—— He eats, and eats, and eats away—— I only hope I have scattered enough millet and hemp-seed to satisfy his hunger! My two eyes eagerly devour him. He comes and goes, pecks to right and left, before and behind. Look! He comes across a hard grain of hemp that he has some trouble to crack. He splits it with such force, that a shred of the husk flies right across to me. Brave little fellow! He has as good a beak for eating as for songs! Not a crumb remains along the whole length of the marble. As it is not an easy matter for him to walk on a flat and slippery surface, he progresses by abrupt pretty little hops. He does not extend his wings for these brief flights, it suffices him slightly to bend the tip of his tail. To see the marvellous suppleness, the infinite grace, the ravishing attitudes of this feathered creature, as proud as you please now his crop is something like full, as radiant and rejoicing as can be—to see this is to feel with what prodigality nature has lavished beauty from top to bottom of creation. If I remember rightly, it is somewhere written in your *Livres Saints* :—' The Heavens declare the glory of God, *Cœli enarrant*

gloriam Dei.' And this goldfinch of mine, my dear Arribas, does this goldfinch tell nothing of that?

"At this minute he is rummaging behind the clock. Take care! The cage is there, with its door wide open, like a well-laid trap. He has taken cursory note of it, but no serious heed. He returns from his expedition to the clock, with his beak full; he has discovered a last grain of millet in that direction——

"Ah! This time I have flown in my turn, and while, after a banquet, a debauch of more than an hour's duration, he is quietly slaking his thirst in the clear water of my low-rimmed saucer, I shut to the door of the cage. He is caught. At last!

VI

"'Hang it! Joséphine again!'

"'What is it now?'

"'A woman, sir!'

"'A woman! What woman!'

"'The woman who used to sell coal in the Rue Visconti.'

"'Pay her her bill, and let her be off.'

"'But I don't owe her anything, sir. Besides, she has sold her business this long time.'

"'Well, what on earth does she want then, this coal-seller of yours?'

"'I don't know—— I fancy she has come about the goldfinch——'

"'The goldfinch! my goldfinch—— show her in,' I say after hiding the cage behind the window-curtains.

"A woman of from sixty to sixty-five, so tall as only just to get through my study door, which is low, like all the doors of the entresol I occupy, enters quietly and makes her curtsy. She honours me with that humble and cordial greeting that our Cévennes folk give to the well-to-do people of the parish, particularly to his reverence the Curé. I at once get a whiff of the odour of my native country-side, which from time immemorial, has produced more coal-sellers, polishers, water-carriers, commissionaires, and curates, let me say it without disrespect for yourself, than men of genius.

"My visitor looks at me. She breathes not a word. I fancy, for

that matter, that she would have much trouble to speak, for her breath comes panting. She comes from a distance, no doubt, like my goldfinch, who trembled at least as much from fatigue as from fear when he invaded my sanctum.

"'What is your will, Madam?'

"Unable to answer me, she lets me know it by laying her right hand on her heaving breast.

"I offer her a chair. She curtsies once more and sits down.

"This coal-seller from the Rue Visconti is wonderfully neat, and better dressed than her fellows in the other streets of Paris, lolling at their shop doors, as ragged as beggars, blacker than their lumps of coal, which lie heaped even against their very skirts. Then again, the unusual height of this stranger, who, despite her sixty years and more, has preserved an indescribable air of suppleness and ease, gives a look of robust resolution to her whole person, that carries me back irresistibly to my childhood.

"How many times, of a Sunday, at Camplong, after the last stroke of the bell before high mass, while my uncle was finishing robing himself for the altar in the vestry, have I stood at the door of the sacristy to watch the people coming into our church. I would see Verdier, Birot, Bassac, then the women folk of those well-to-do peasants. Bassac's wife, and Birot's, and the she-Verdier. Oh! that Verdier woman, what a noble and superb look she had in my eyes! While mother Bassac, 'crammed with crown-pieces,' as they say down in our parts, would advance bent double over her stick; and dame Birot, worn out by avarice and the hard work of the fields, harder than ever in our mountain country, seemed all crooked, twisted by her sciatica, dame Verdier, the least well-off of the three, would come to us from the highest street in the village with the ease, the liberty, the air, and importance of a queen. Her handsome face, clear, open, kindly, almost laughing as it was, dazzled me. If the crabbed, parchment-skinned visage of mother Bassac, and the Birot woman had frightened me, I was now reassured. Only to see Verdier's wife, who, even in winter, with the snow on the ground, had never worn our heavy Cévennes sabot, put down her long

thin foot among the slippery flints of our lanes, was heavenly joy to me. I hardly know what her exact age was; forty, perhaps.

"Brought up at the parsonage, with no chance of communication with another world than the narrow world of Prudence and my uncle, I was unusually child-like, and a thousand trifling things, touched and troubled me that passed unobserved by you, Prosper, in Les Passettes farm, a bookless, almost prayerless farm, noisy with the clatter of servants, the hubbub of labourers, the tumult of cattle. Thus, what would you think, were I to confess to you that, as regards Verdier's better half, the sight of the fine prayer-book, whose gilt edge gleamed under the dexterous movement of her hand, affected and delighted me, as much as her gait and her countenance. This marvellous, this unique prayer-book that—O delicious thought—must contain the service for every feast and fast in the year, was wonderfully like my uncle's breviary, and even the wrapper for the binding seemed to me of finer stuff, of a better cut than the cloth wrapper of the breviary, worked by our housekeeper, more accustomed to looking after our goat, than using needle and scissors. When the radiant wife of Verdier, the deputy-mayor, passed before the door of the sacristy, her flounced dress, slightly raised, sweeping against me, my longing to get hold of her prayer-book was as great as my longing to give her a kiss. My nature and my education struggled for a second, but ultimately, filled with terror, I shrank back into the sacristy, accompanied my uncle to the altar, and after the *Vidi aquam*—— had been intoned, I gave myself up to chanting with my whole heart and voice.

"This coal-seller of Joséphine's was a dame Verdier at a riper age. I recognized the same 'fine lady' air of Camplong, the same proud carriage, almost the same longish features, soft and kind. But I was far from finding the same gaiety, the same smiles, the graceful movements of the head, that had so wrought on me at the sacristy door. On the slightest opportunity dame Verdier, to display the richness of her head-gear, would shake its ribbons and lace, with the air of a costly steed showing off some gorgeous bit of trapping. The stranger sitting in my study had perhaps been familiar with these coquettish tricks, but alas! the fire of youth had been long extinguished in her, and now she was

grave, sad, taciturn, down cast. Ah, years, years, my dear Arribas, what havoc they make with what is loveliest among us!

"One detail suddenly strikes me; her black fringed shawl carelessly tied behind her back in the manner of our own country-side. For an old woman, it was a little audacious.

"'I beg you to excuse me, sir, if I disturb you,' she said to me when she had a little recovered herself. 'What brings me is this: there is a goldfinch that has escaped from our home.'

"'A goldfinch?'

"'The neighbours, who watched its flight, have just let me know that it made for the Institute buildings, and your concierge believes it has sought refuge in your room. If you would only be so good as to restore it to me——'

"A clear, sharp note, at once sparkling and full, cut short the coal-seller of the Rue Visconti, who, on her feet at one bound, throws back the big curtain of my window and seizes the cage without stopping to ask my leave.

"'Cardy! My Cardy!——' she repeated, clasping the cage with both her arms, her voice trembling and her eyes dim.

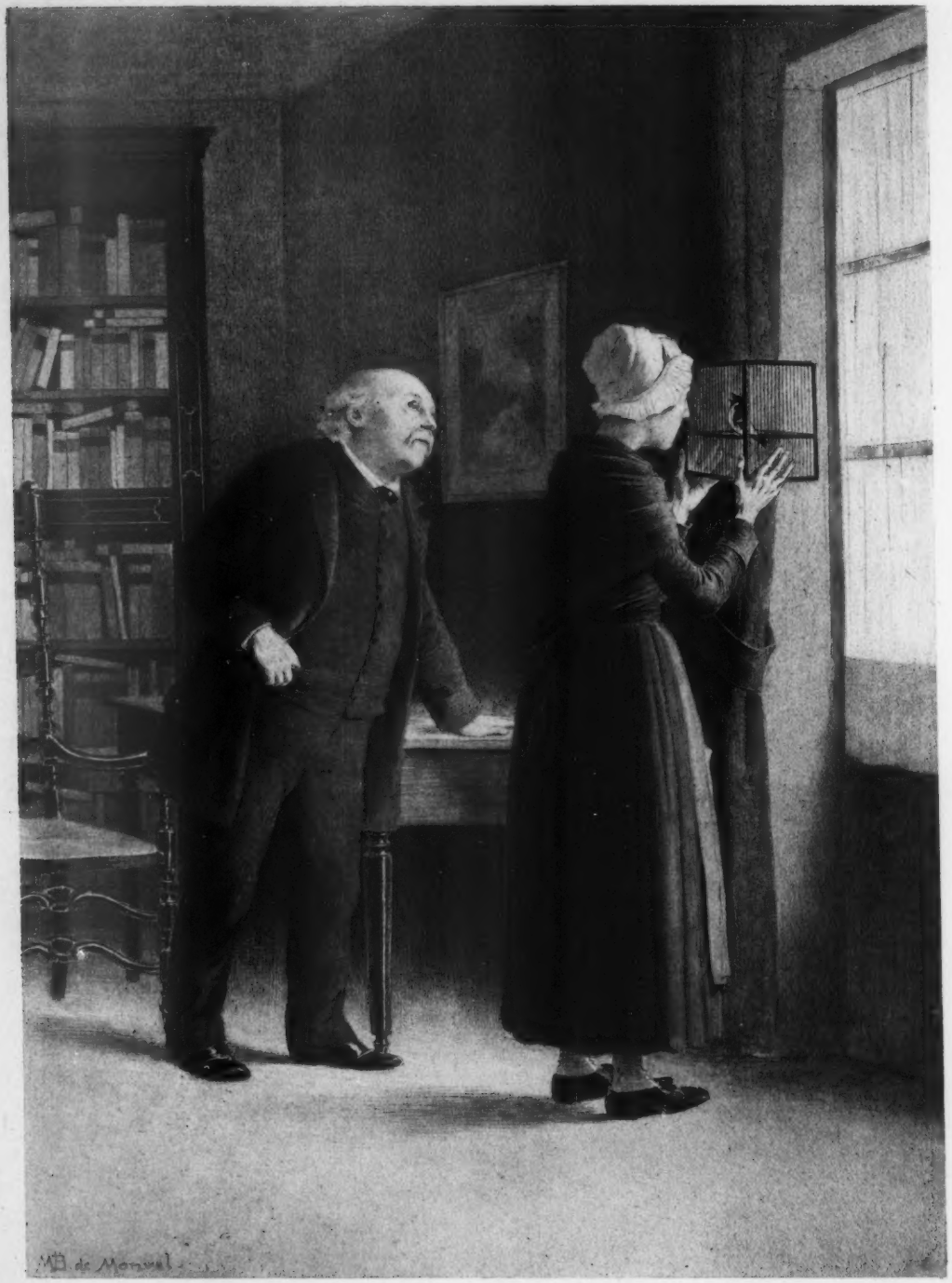
"And the bird swelled out his little throat, with all his might, and showered his vibrating notes on her like so many caresses and thanks.

VII

"Cardy never ceased singing, and Joséphine's coal-seller never ceased answering him with long affectionate coaxing, then with words of a pathetic tenderness that went to my heart.

"'And where did you sleep, my little sweet?' she said to him. 'Where did you roost last night? I looked for you all along the Rue Visconti, the Rue Bonaparte, and you were not there—— Ah, Cardy! Cardy! No one was able to close their eyes on account of you——'

"On his part, he had stationed himself on the topmost perch of his cage, had stretched out his slightly ruffled neck, and, with his head thrust through the wires, was eagerly listening. Now and then, when his mistress paused, he set off with a very soft and sweet twittering, giving her the best answer in his power.


MB de Manuel

"'So then, your goldfinch flew away from your place yesterday evening?' I asked.

"'Yesterday evening, about seven o'clock. This is how it happened—— I must first tell you, sir, that I am very unhappy just at this time, my husband has been at death's door for this week past.'

"'Poor woman——'

"'It is his chest that wants air, and so makes him short of breath; the merest trifle makes him ill. Here, in Paris, where you have always more work than you can do with, where there are so many people that every one treads on some one else's heels, you have no time to see after yourself; and they dont think much about God in this madly busy ant-hill. We, in spite of our load of daily work, have managed so as never to miss going to service on Sundays and Saints' days. And God has heaped his blessings on us for it. I guessed full well that Doctor Baret of the Rue de Seine, had very little hope; this notwithstanding, I dared not risk a word to my husband about the last sacraments. You see, that might give him a shock, and, even to open the gates of Heaven to him I was unwilling to hazard his life—— It was of his own accord, quite of his own accord, that, yesterday morning, after a long fit of coughing that nearly carried him off, he asked me to fetch his reverence the Abbé Birgassol. His reverence the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol, fourth minister of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, is the son of Antoine Birgassol, to whom we sold our business, people of our own country-side——

"'Of what part?'

"'Truscas, in the Cévennes——'

"'What! You are from Truscas?'

"'The Birgassols are from Truscas parish; but we are of the parish of Rocaillet——'

"'Rocaillet!' I cried out in excitement.

"'Do you know the place?'

"'Do I know it? One of my friends is Curé there at this moment."

"'A friend of yours, sir!'

"'And one of the dearest of friends, the Abbé Prosper Arribas, of Les Passettes, near Camplong.'

"'The Abbé Prosper Arribas! What, Prosper Arribas, Arribassou of Les Passettes farm, is a Curé?'

"'He is, and Curé of Rocaillet.'

"'I am not surprised : they were such good and worthy people, those Arribases, of Les Passettes. I have helped them at the chestnut-harvest, in times gone by—ah! long, long ago.'

"As these recollections of her native place carried her out of herself, a sort of inspiration came over the old, wearied woman, and for a second brought back her youth. In this lightning flash of rejuvenescence, I saw Honorine Jalaguier, trudging along, leaning on her goat-herd's staff, turning round at your call, waiting for us in the midst of her goats among the chestnut-groves of Rocaillet.

"'Are you not called Honorine Jalaguier?'

"'You know my name!'

"'You are from Les Cérisoles, in the parish of Rocaillet, and, about 1842, you were married to Justin Lebasset——'

"'But who told you, sir?'

"'I was there with Prosper Arribas, with Arribassou, when your grandfather, your 'grand,' Barthélemy Jalaguier, gave you to Justin. Do you remember? The goldfinches in the cherry-trees——'

"'I remember! I remember!' she repeated, laying her hand on her heart. She was panting heavily as at the moment of her arrival.

"'Then,' she got out with an effort, 'you are the nephew of his reverence the Abbé Fulcran, Curé of Camplong?'

"'Yes, I am Master nephew, a master nephew greatly changed, grown much older, mighty respectable—— Alas! the chestnut-groves of Rocaillet are a long, long way off!'

"Honorine Lebasset, after three seconds' hesitation, yielded to the prompting of her heart, full of the vision of Les Cérisoles, the vision of her youthful years, and held out both her hands. I was deeply moved, and, when my fingers touched hers, the tears came into my eyes.

"'If my husband could only see you, what good it would do him!' she murmured.

"'He shall see me, I promise you, he shall see me.'

"'We don't live far from the Institute. We are at No. 6, Rue Visconti, third floor. What happiness for my poor Justin! When he hears any talk about his own country-side, he doesn't feel his illness for the time. He loves Rocaillet and Les Cérisoles so dearly, that he would surely have got well of his complaint in the old home, if I had been able to have him taken there. But, first of all, our settling up with the Birgassols kept us for six months : then, when we were able to go away, Doctor Baret was not willing to let us, fearing a mishap on the journey. What would you have? God disposes of all things, and of us. Besides, I must admit, that Heaven has not overlooked our misery, and has not left us without consolation, since it has given us Cardy.'

"'So this goldfinch here has——'

"'If you but knew him! If you were aware how obedient he is, how he falls to singing if only Justin makes him the slightest sign with his finger, or whistles with his lips. It was the Birgassols' son-in-law, Baptiste Lizier who, going to Truscas last year, brought him back for us. He had limed him on the banks of the Cérisoles brook, at a few yards' distance from the hut where you saw my grandfather for the first time. Yesterday evening, I had placed Cardy's cage on my invalid's bed, and Justin, whose sufferings have made him a little deaf, was listening to the bird, enjoying his company, having him quite close to his ear. Suddenly his reverence the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol appears, followed by a sacristan from Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The people of God were entering the room. I was confused, lost my head, and lifted the cage so sharply that the door caught in my apron, flew open, and Cardy fled away, passing over the heads of the whole Birgassol family, on their knees—— That is how it happened.'

"She could say no more. I put the cage in her hand, and led her to the door, renewing my promise to go soon and see how her husband was getting on. When crossing the court of my wing, my convent court, the ungrateful Cardy sent forth notes of joy that pierced me to the heart.

VIII

"The next day, I could hold out no longer, my dear Arribas, I felt

I must go and see my Cérisoles goldfinch once more. With my head full of Cardy's pretty tunes, I took my way, about two o'clock, along the Rue Bonaparte in the direction of the Rue Visconti, which is within gunshot of the Institute. What an alley, egad! Throughout Paris where, for the last five and thirty years I have paced so many weary steps, I know only the narrow gut of the Rue du Chat-qui-Pêche, on the Quai Saint-Michel, that could be compared with the little Rue Visconti. I go with my nose in the air, my eyes fixed on the somewhat mildewed, somewhat decrepit walls. I have forgotten the Lebassets' number, and I have not asked Joséphine for it, as she is quite capable of finding something strange in my visit to her old coal-seller, and of letting her tongue wag about it with her fellow servants of the Palais Mazarin.

"Hullo : I pull up short. On a tablet of black marble let into the embrasure of a carriage entrance, I read these words in gilt letters :

HOTEL DE RANES

JEAN RACINE Y MOURUT LE 22 AVRIL 1699

"Jean Racine, your favourite poet, my dear Prosper, the 'sublime' author of *Esther* and *Athalie*. You see that, in spite of its being so small and narrow—two cabs could not pass one another in it—the Rue Visconti is anything but a mere commonplace street.

"*Fonderie Deberny; Krafft, relieur; Caderini, fumiste; Joseph Rousset, fondeur; Haro, éditeur*—— Where on earth, then, do these Lebassets live? I have only five or six more houses left to inspect before I emerge into the Rue de Seine. The pavement now narrows down to the size of your finger, you can't walk without touching the walls with your elbow. I get into the roadway, and turn homewards. After all, if my longing to hear the never-to-be-forgotten Cardy from Les Cérisoles should attack me too sharply, I can take the risk of questioning Joséphine.

"Good. I am close on the Rue de Seine. Suddenly I stand transfixed. What is the matter? The matter is that, if my ears don't sing of their own accord, I have heard the goldfinch belonging to Honorine Jalaguier and Justin Lebasset, my Institute goldfinch. My eyes start out of my head. I discover Cardy, high up at a third-floor window. He has caught

sight of me for, without interrupting his song, he cocks his head on one side, and stares at me through the trellis-work of his cage—— This trellis is apparently so fine that Cardy looks as if he were quite free on the Lebassets' window-sill. As I prepare to ascend the staircase, this inscription, freshly painted and varnished, over a hole blacker than the entrance to the mine of Sainte-Barbe at Graissessac, stares me in the face :

BOIS ET CHARBONS

ANTOINE BIRGASSOL, SUCCESSEUR DE JUSTIN LEBASSET

"I enter the passage.

"If you remember, my dear friend, the state of perfect order, of glitter—excuse this dubious word—in which the Jalaguiers' hut appeared to us in 1842, the day of our trip to Truscas in quest of trout, you will get an idea of the wonderful tidiness in which I found the Jalaguiers' rooms. Let Mirette be surprised if she likes : the Honorine of Paris has remained the Norine of Les Cérisoles. It was she who came to open the door to me.

"'Ah! sir—— Ah! sir——' she repeated, with trembling lips, much moved, not knowing how to thank me.

"'What about your husband?' I asked her.

"'Alas! I was praying when you rang.'

"'So then?——'

"'It is for God to take pity and not abandon us.'

"'Is it permissible for me to see your invalid?'

"'Indeed and indeed it is, sir! I am sure, besides, that your visit will brace him up a bit. Everything that reminds him of his own country-side does him good. I told him how Cardy had had the good luck to take refuge with you, at the Institute, and you can't think what pleasure that gave him!—— Will you kindly sit down for one minute?—— I can't let you at once into poor Justin's room,' she continued apologising; 'His reverence the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol is at this moment engaged with him. You have come at the very time of his reverence's usual visit, for his reverence, who is an angel, visits him in the afternoon every day—— But may be you have no time to wait?——'

"'I have time, plenty of time.'

"A little saucepan full of water was boiling on a tripod in the grate.

She threw into it a handful of dry, curled up herbs. 'It is lichen from the herbalist's,' she said, as she went on with her work. 'I mix this broth with milk, and Justin gets relief from it. Oh, that cough of his! That cough! What would you have? There is a reason, no doubt, for everything—— Still when I think how we were beginning to be a little at ease, a little comfortable—after having toiled so hard in this Paris, where the days are so long for work, and the nights so short for rest—— If only Théodore had been spared to us—— Our only son, sir. He was given to us a little late, but he was as strong as one of our own pollard oaks at home. Well, sir, we lost him through a chill, on the very morning he was to have received the tonsure from Monseigneur's hands, at Saint-Sulpice. It makes no difference that six years have gone by since this misfortune, it seems to me as though it had happened only yesterday——'

"She took her saucepan off the fire and then, coming close to me, she murmured very softly : 'Sir, my belief is that my husband has never been able to get over our child's death. He would say to me, when I was grieving : 'Aren't you ever going to leave off crying? You know well enough, Norine, that your tears won't bring our sonny back.' All the same, though he tried to put a bold face on his grief, his appetite dwindled and dwindled, and soon he ate, so to speak, nothing at all. You can imagine the sauces I made him, the old Rocaillet sauces just to cheer him up a bit! Unhappily, my country cookery tempted him no more than the regular Paris diet, and he got thinner and thinner—— One evening—it was last April—we were sitting in this room, he where you are, and I where I am now. Suddenly he began coughing, coughing dreadfully—— I was taken with a trembling in all my limbs, I recognized the cough, the harsh, hoarse cough, of Théodore—— Ah, my God! Ah, my God! when I think of it!——'

"'What is the matter, Justin? What is the matter?' I asked him.

"'Nothing, nothing.' He answered.

"'Then after the coughing fit was over, turning towards me a face that had become quite white, and looking at me with eyes not of this world, he added these words : 'Théodore calls me—— I have seen him


B. de Monvel.

to-night distinctly—— He beckoned to me—— After all said and done, life is a heavy burden without my sonny, and if you were not there, I should be glad to be quit of it——'

"A door opened. The Abbé Guillaume Birgassol appeared.

"'Madame Lebasset,' he said, 'if you would like to join in the prayer.

"Honorine quietly wiped her face glistening with tears, then followed the vicar into the next room——

"The room door remained half-open. May be, while they had not ventured to invite me, they were not loath to let me hear the prayer. Suddenly Cardy sent forth a stream of brilliant notes. I risked three steps, gazing straight ahead.

"The cage had been taken out of the window, and placed on a chair in the middle of the room. From where I was I could not see the sick man, who was hidden by his wife and the Abbé; but sure enough of the goldfinch, quite still on his perch and singing with all his might, I had a good view. What an admirable overture this winged musician was playing as a sort of introduction to the prayer.

"'Sh-h-h!' said Honorine, holding up her hand to Cardy.

"The bird was silent.

"Thereupon, the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol, with a slow gesture, made the sign of the cross; then in our Cévennes dialect, he gravely and solemnly recited the *Pater :*

"'*Notre Païre qué siès al Ciel, qué bostré noun sego santifiat*——, Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name——

"Arribas, the tears came into my eyes, too.

IX

"As soon as the vicar of Saint-Germain-des-Prés had taken his departure, Honorine beckoned to me! I entered the sick room. I cannot find words, my dear friend, to picture to you the naïve delight of Justin Lebasset on seeing me. His weakness not allowing him to rise from the big wicker arm-chair in which he half-sat half-lay, as his wife had done at the Institute with touching simplicity, he held out both his hands. Then he took a long look at me.

"'Thank you, sir, thank you,' he sighed out. 'I felt a deep satisfaction just now, while his reverence was reciting *Notre Père* : Norine having told me beforehand that you were coming to see me, something told me that you were close by. A glimpse of people from his own country-side is sweet to a poor man like me, especially the sight of those whom he knew in the old happy days. Do you remember our betrothal, Norine's and mine, under the trees near the hut, in the blazing sun, amid the singing of the Rocaillet goldfinches?'

"A sudden pang of emotion, cutting short, or rather drowning his voice, he was dumb. He looked at his wife, and fixing on her two eyes dreadfully dilated, enlarged in proportion to the wasting away of the features, over which Death had passed his noiseless scythe—'Ah! sir, how she has tended me with all the wealth of goodness that is in her! It is painful, to be sure, to find myself in this state of mine; but should I ever have known what my wife is worth, if I were not in the grip of this vile chill that is squeezing the strength out of me drop by drop?'

"'Courage, my dear,' interposed Honorine. She smiled tenderly on him.

"After a pause, he turned again towards me.

"'Sir,' he said. 'I want to beg a little favour of you.'

"'Little or big, I shall be very happy to grant it.'

"The hollow of his cheeks,—for his wasted face was full of hollows,—the hollow of his cheeks coloured up; his big staring eyes half-closed, and he timidly got out : 'If our acquaintance dated from yesterday, I should not venture to trouble you; but it is now years and years since we saw one another for the first time. Besides, you can't help having something in you of your uncle, his reverence the Curé Fulcran, who in my youth, when I was with the Arribases, at Les Passettes farm, got me out of a nasty bit of trouble——'

"'Well, what is the matter in question?'

"'It is just a question of Norine.'

"'Of me, Justin?'

"'Suppose you were to give me a drop of your nice broth?' he stammered, his breath failing him.

"'That I will; I have just made some——'

"'I feel a pricking in the throat, my cough is going to begin again——'

"The paroxysm was extremely violent. Oh, the pity of it! Poor Lebasset, the victim of a sort of internal explosion to which his organs were not yet weak enough to allow free expansion, was shaken, shattered, twisted, limb by limb, nerve by nerve, so to speak, thread by thread. He gasped and sweated, till he was utterly spent. While his wife was straining and sweetening the decoction of lichen, I had twice to hold up the poor martyr, whom the terrible tempest of his cough threatened to throw off his chair, and hurl into the fire.

"'God in Heaven!' he groaned at intervals 'God in Heaven.'

"Three of four gulps of lichen, taken in succession, alleviated the crisis, and finally got the better of it altogether. The sick man, after bending forward, with his hands pressed in the hollow of his chest, threw himself on his back, drawing sharp and painful breaths. Honorine supported him, encouraging him by a word or a caress. More than once, yielding to the tender affection that had remained uninterrupted since the old happy days at Les Cérisoles, she carried her husband's right hand to her lips and imprinted fervent kisses on it.

"As for myself, dear Arribas, I stood watching the scene in the deepest distress and, while Justin and Honorine caught, both of them, in 'the press of grief,' as Holy Writ hath it, were murmuring into each other's ears words of consolation, I saw once more the young, handsome couple in the very flower of life, under the cherry-trees, swarming with the goldfinches, of old blind Barthélemy Jalaguier—— What! It was thus that after forty-five years that splendid festival, blest in the lap of mother nature herself by a venerable old man, glorified by the echoing song of all the birds of Rocaillet, was drawing to a close in a narrow grimy Paris street! O life of man! O life of man, shadow of a dream!

"But Lebasset, taking comfort from the heroic heart of his wife, raises himself a little; his gaze wanders, passes on one side of me without being aware of my presence, lights on the cage where Cardy is incessantly pecking away. The bird becomes conscious of the look, leaves his feeding-trough, mounts his perch, and begins to pipe. The song starts a little irregularly, a bit of millet still sticking to the bird's tongue

doubtless interferes to some extent with the tune. Suddenly it grows finer. The melody comes out more clearly and frankly, shews more science, and freer development. At length it bursts out in full force. Justin seems in ecstasy; he cannot take his eyes off the goldfinch.

"'Sir,' he says to me, 'as soon as Cardy opens his beak, I find myself back at Rocaillet. The thing is extraordinary. He sends out a note, and I see the old place again just as if I were there. When, in the old times, I was at the chestnut-harvesting at Camplong, I remember hearing his reverence the Abbé Fulcran say that God had created man out of the dust of the earth. Ah! I am a thorough bit of Cévennes earth, I am! And so, sir, I want to get back to that land of my childhood—— And get back I shall—— Hark ye, Norine, you know my weakness; I have a sweet tooth. If you would only go and buy me one of Quillet's *éclairs,* as you do every day, I fancy I should relish that; whatever happens, dear little Cardy is at hand to help me—— Do Norine do,' he added, in a tone of prayer.

"She left us to ourselves.

X

"Hardly had Honorine closed the door behind her, when Lebasset summoned me by a look, stretching towards me that wasted, hollowed-out head of his, with its two big ears spread out like flags amid a sprinkling of white, unkempt tufts of hair.

"'Sir,' said he, 'what is troubling me in the hour of my death, for I feel that I am going to die, is that poor thing who has gone out to buy me a cake, my wife. If you but knew what she has been to me since the Rocaillet days! Well—— here is my plan. I want to be buried in the place where I was born. 'Tis my fancy. We folk of the Cévennes mountain-side are quite capable of leaving it to go and earn our bread at the other end of the world; but, our purse once lined, we have only one desire, to see the people we knew once more, and the animals as well, aye, and the fields, and the trees. At first, when I opened my mouth about my intention to Norine, she was vexed, and wept till she could weep no longer; then, when I began again at

my notion, as you would drive a nail into the wall, she reconciled herself little by little to our journey to the Espinouse, and yesterday evening, on her return from the Institute, where she had been talking with you, we found ourselves both of the same mind. One thing troubled her above all : the thought that I should be in the Rocaillet cemetery at home : in the midst of relatives and friends, under the shadow of our belfry, while our child—— '

" His voice broke in a sob.

" ' I know, my good Lebasset, what a terrible trial you had to go through. Your wife has told me all.'

" He went on bravely : ' While our son lay behind in the Montparnasse cemetery, without a friend, alone in Paris, where nobody concerns himself about you, or when you pass by, turns to speak a word to you. I reassured her at once, and told her that, after laying our heads together for some time, his reverence the Abbé Guillaume and I had both made up our minds that if, by God's will, I was taken away from this world, Théodore should follow me to the old home—— '

" His breath suddenly failed him.

" ' Rest yourself—— by and by—— '

" ' No, sir, for Norine will soon be back—— She cried, ah! how she cried as she listened to me. But, would you believe it, sir, her tears seemed to me less sad, seemed to cost her less suffering now. When I had finished, she said to me : ' If God wills that, after losing my child, I shall lose my husband too, I will go and live by their side at Rocaillet, for I will not leave them.' Then she fell on her knees and added these words that she often repeats :

" ' O God, Thy will, and not mine, be done! ' ' That sir, is what we Lebassets have come to.'

" Unable to get out a word, I squeezed his hands affectionately in mine. He appeared deeply moved.

" ' Oh, Master nephew! Master nephew! ' he stammered, and then, in a firmer tone : ' I am thinking of your journey to Truscas with Arribassou. By the way, it seems, from what you have been telling Norine, that Arribassou, of Les Passettes, is Curé of Rocaillet at this very

moment—— If you would only be kind enough to recommend Norine to his care—— you see, she has lost touch of her old home, and, when she arrives, if only his reverence the Curé Prosper Arribas would so much as hold out to her the tip of his finger! She has some cousins of her own at Campilliergues, near Rocaillet, as I have, on my side, at Truscas. But your cousins are only good to eat you up when the chance offers, and I want Norine, on settling down with her belongings at Rocaillet, to keep off the greedy crew as long as possible.'

"'So then, you have got some coppers together, as you call it?'

"'I should think we had, and silver too—— Hasn't Norine, then, told you about our fortune?'

"'She hasn't talked to me of your money matters.'

"He gave a little movement of pride; then, with a twinkling of the eyes: 'Sir,' he said, 'we have got forty thousand francs in our old stocking, and if the Birgassols, who are a little straitened just now, ultimately pay up the five thousand francs they owe us for the purchase of the shop and good-will, we shall possess forty-five thousand francs. A nice little pile, eh? But Norine and I well know what it has cost us, for Théodore, who was studying for the priesthood at the seminary, with his reverence the Abbé Guillaume, never put his hand to a stroke of work. You can imagine whether or no we had to get up early, here, and go to bed late! And well do I know those staircases of yours at the Institute, and M. Villemain's too, and M. Francisque Duret's and M. Beulé's, and M. Philarète Chasles'! I have been a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for all these gentlemen, not to mention the cleaning and scrubbing at M. de Sacy's! A fine fellow he is that M. de Sacy, a little chap and paleish, but as full of sap as a twig of a chestnut-tree! It was he who got our boy into the Seminary of Saint-Nicholas to begin with, and then into the High Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, our Théodore——'

"He lay dumb for a long interval. Then he went on.

"'You see what pinching it cost us to amass this big sum, and how we had to put up with dinners of Brie cheese with slices of dry bread! Privation came easy to us. Our idea, Norine's and mine, was to live

on the sous that should chance to be left behind in the bottom of our pockets. But if once the sous, mounting up to twenty, got changed into silver, look out! Then, we tightened our belts, and the bit of white money was put aside to see the sun no more. It was one "prisoner' the more, as we used to laughingly say—— Ah, those 'prisoners,' those 'prisoners!' what a lot of them we made! And all this, sir, in the hope that, when Théodore should be ordained, Monseigneur of Montpellier should apply for him, and place him on our Espinouse hill-side, and that Norine and I should go back to Rocaillet, there to spend, in our own way and not far from our sonny, our last years here below—— But you see what life has done with us. Théodore is dead, I shall die to-day or to-morrow——'

"Cardy, up to this point an attentive listener, with his pretty head stretched out towards his master, gave himself a vigorous shake, hopped from one perch to the other, and sent forth a sharp cry——

"'It's Norine,' murmured the sick man, sinking back, into his chair.

XI

"I saw Justin Lebasset die, my dear Arribas, and I was impressed and touched to the very depths of my soul. I only ask that God, when my hour comes, will grant me such calm, such strength in the supreme struggle with life. Not one complaint, not one groan; once only did he cast a look of grief and agony on his wife, then sighed out with his already stiffening lips, this single word, 'Théodore.' Marcus Aurelius would have had us quit life, 'as a ripe olive falls, kissing the soil that has nourished it, from the tree that has borne it.' The Rocaillet peasant had this fine, simple, noble death of a fruit of the earth that returns to the common stock of all things, without a cry, without despair, without any struggle. Do not take fright, I conjure you, at this quotation from the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, who persecuted the Christians; I present it to you with the same respect that you would shew in giving me a sacred text. You know, my old Arribas, all the saints are not canonized.

"I cannot tell you to what an extent the whole Birgassol family,

father, mother, son, daughter, and son-in-law, shewed kindness to Honorine, overwhelmed as she was, and half-dead. Our rough and hard mountain-side still remains the country of warm hearts, aye, and true and great hearts withal. The Abbé Guillaume was particularly affectionate and full of delicacy. While his relatives, in their eager attentions to the widow, shewed themselves, with native frankness, a little rough in their attempts at consolation, he found utterance for really heavenly words, that fell on Honorine's ear like a quickening and refreshing dew. I don't know how it was that he succeeded in introducing Théodore's name among the honeyed things he had the sense to think of. Some pure hearts have secret ways of reaching the secrets of another pure heart, without wounding it.

"It was the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol who read the funeral service, and he performed this solemn duty of religious affection with a fervour, a dignity, a sincerity of emotion that deeply touched me. You must know that this young ecclesiastic—may be he is thirty—tall, fair, with long and clear features, a high forehead, and a grave mouth, looks very well in the priestly vestments, which he wears with an ease that indicates the very best taste. While he was praying for the soul of Justin Lebasset with an ardour to which his old friendship for his fellow-pupil at Saint-Sulpice, Théodore Lebasset, added an indescribable element of tenderness, I, for my part, contemplated his relatives standing among the bystanders, and in face of Antoine Birgassol, all shaggy and wrinkled, wrapped round in his serge habit, like an Espinouse oak in its bark, in face of Angélique Birgassol, stiff as a blackened post at the mouth of some Graissessac mine, I asked myself by what miracle a shoot so trim, so shapely, so supple, so graceful in every way, had managed to spring from these gnarled, wild trunks.

"As we entered Saint-Germain-des-Prés, we numbered scarcely twenty; coming out, we were over a hundred. Lebasset's friends, getting timely notice, arrived breathless from all the opposite corners of Paris, and noiselessly took their places in the procession. What a lot of broad-brimmed black felt hats, of blue smock-frocks as stiff as boards, of bottle-green velvet trousers more baggy than sacks! In the very middle of the Rue de Rennes, amid the tramways, omnibuses, vans and carts,



casting a glance along the ranks, I fancied myself for a moment in one of our picturesque Cévennes valleys, the day some grand funeral—there are such—has brought the whole village together.

"At the cemetery the Abbé Guillaume found very just and elevated, while at the same time very simple, words in which to bring vividly before every one the life of this worker who was called Justin Lebasset.

"Borrowing from a hymn of Saint Thomas, this verse

In labore requies
In æstu temperies
In fletu solatium.

he soared gradually to eloquence. Honorine's eyes, a little wild and dry as they had become since the previous day, brimmed over, when the priest, turning from the crowd of guests for whose benefit he had been extolling 'the rest, the sweetness, the refreshment of labour,' addressed himself to her, to her alone, and shewed her the consolation she would find in tears. 'God is with you in the midst of your grief,' was his conclusion, 'and when He, in His mercy, shall deem fit to let flow the well-spring of your tears, you will be consoled : *in fletu solatium*.'

"We all accompanied Honorine back to the Rue Visconti. The little set of rooms on the third floor had a sinister appearance in my eyes. Cardy, rolled up into a ball at one end of his perch, sat motionless, noiseless, with his feathers all stiffened out, as though asleep. The cage, with its saucer brimming over, its feeding trough full, its floor all dirty and neglected, had a look of desolation that wrung my heart. One by one, stammering out a word or two with infinite pain, my Cévennes friends took their leave, and the rest of us, the three Birgassols, the two Liziers, and I, remained behind. The widow, crouching down on a low chair, a Cérisoles chair—was lamenting, and amid her grievous lamentations were woven all sorts of anxieties. How was she, who hardly knew her A.B.C. to set about getting Théodore's body exhumed, or her husband's body removed from the temporary vault in which it had just been laid? How could she ever pluck up heart, when the day for going away came, to set out on this journey? She was alone, all alone in the world now, and——

"'So, Norine, you consider us as strangers?' interposed old Antoine Birgassol.

"'What, Norine, you think us capable of leaving you in your trouble!' cried Annette Birgassol in a flood of tears.

"'Madame Lebasset,' said the Abbé Guillaume, 'have no fear for the future, I entreat you.'

"And venturing to take hold of the widow's hands, and to keep them in his own, with that simplicity common to priests, young or old, who have the privilege of a saint-like familiarity that no one could dream of taking offence at.

"'You know well enough, Madame Lebasset, whether or no my relations are devoted to you, whether they love you or no. As for myself, who have learnt to honour you from my childhood, who was the friend of your son now in Heaven, I am your devoted friend, and I love you. Do me the kindness of reckoning on my zealous care for all the requisite arrangements, and let no anxiety disturb you. Let me add, now, that the day you have settled your affairs in Paris, when everything is ready, it shall be my privilege to accompany you as far as Rocaillet, and to see you settled there.'

"'Oh, your reverence!' she cried with a burst of sobbing.

"She got upon her feet, and holding out her trembling arms to the vicar of Saint-Germain-des-Prés :

"'Guillaume, dear Guillaume, my Théodore's greatest friend,' she stammered out.

"After the Abbé, she embraced all the family.

"'You are my real kin—my real kin.'

"Repeating this word kin, she opened a cupboard, and from the bottom of a drawer took out a paper which she shewed to the old coal-seller, Lebasset's successor, in the Rue Visconti.

"'Antoine,' she said to him, 'we have known one another for these thirty years and more, and after so long a friendship, we can tell well enough what is the worth of each of us. The Birgassols are 'ingots of gold' as they say at Rocaillet—— Antoine, your business has not got as you wished, as we reckoned it would, when you left the

Rue du Battoir, by the Hospice de la Pitié, to come here. Who knows whether you are not too conscientious, too honest? However that may be, this is what I do with the bill for five thousand francs you gave to my husband. I tear it up. You owe me nothing, nothing at all.'

"'But Norine, Norine,' stammered the old fellow, his knees giving way beneath him.

"'You are my kin!' she cried, carried away by emotion.

"'But Norine——' faltered Annette, whiter than the strings of her newly ironed cap.

"'You are my kin!'

"'But Madame Lebasset, in a few years I could have discharged a debt——'

"'You, Guillaume, are my son!'

"And once more she embraced him.

"Cardy awoke, and sent forth now and again, like golden beads of some rich chaplet falling one by one on a silver dish, scattered and timid notes.

XII

"What would you say of me, my dear Arribas, if I were to let you know the puerile preoccupations by which I have been beset since the death of Justin Lebasset. Assuredly you would shrug your shoulders, and Mirette, too. Shrug them, my friend, if you will, but let me confess to you that Cardy absorbs all my thoughts, that I am infinitely less sensible to Honorine's mourning than to Cardy's. Madame Lebasset, after all, is a human being, armed with defence against grief; she comes and goes; she talks, she weeps, she associates with the Birgassols, she will ultimately arrive at consolation, that supreme bit of wretchedness, that gives the last touch to our fragility, our nothingness. But what is to become of my dear little Cérisoles goldfinch in the fearful solitude that has now fallen upon him, a prisoner as he is behind the bars of his cage deprived of fresh air, of his native surroundings, of his greatest friend. Do birds share the infirmity that humbles men so low, consolation? Do birds console themselves?

"Since Justin Lebasset left us, a fortnight ago, I have not neglected for a single day to mount to the third floor in the Rue Visconti, to ask after Honorine, I really mean after Cardy. He is getting along pretty well, and this afternoon, as the widow and I, after the cage had been placed on its accustomed chair, were admiring the bird, less fluffy than of yore, thinner, longer, slimmer from head to tail, he set up a discreet pipe.

"'Listen, sir,' said Honorine.

"'His song seems to me as solemn as death!' I murmured.

"'Yes, sir, you are right, like death it is.'

"'Poor Cardy, he can't find consolation——'

"The widow left me abruptly, and I heard her in the adjoining room, burst into sobs.

"Still, Cardy, after beginning in the prolonged, drawling, plaintive tone in which we two, the recognized acolytes of the parish, used to begin the Lamentations of Jeremiah, on Ascension day, in Camplong church, had little by little strengthened his voice, and now, he was going ahead with the whole force of his beak, the whole force of his lungs, as we two used in the *Alleluia* at Easter, when the Lord had risen. The thought that struck me as I watched the bird's rounded swollen out throat was, 'he is trying to divert Honorine, to force her into once more taking an interest in life.'

"Lovable little thing! What a big heart there was in that tiny breast, tinier than a hollyhock leaf in our Rocaillet hedge-rows! My affection for Cardy sprang up into flame at the thought, I felt it burn within me, and the idea took a firm grip of me to ask Honorine Lebasset to entrust, no, to give her goldfinch to me. Of course, she would have no lack of goldfinches at Les Cérisoles, while at the Institute, I——

"There was a knock at the door. I rejoined the widow. Drying her eyes all the time, she was talking to the Abbé Birgassol. The young vicar sat down, and announced that all business matters were now settled, all the necessary steps taken with the 'Administration des Pompes funèbres,' that their departure might take place the next day, if need be.

"'It only remains for us,' he added, 'to see about Cardy——'

"'About Cardy?' I cried.

"'I have brought him a little house to travel in,' continued the Abbé withdrawing from a piece of paper in which it was carefully folded, a wooden cage about as big as my fist.

"'So then, Madame Lebasset, you mean to take Cardy with you?' I asked all in a tremble.

"'Justin was so fond of him,' she answered. 'You may not think it, sir, but having this Cérisoles goldfinch of ours with me, it almost seems to me as though I have Justin's spirit by my side——'

"There was no answer to make to this. With affection and respect I wrung Honorine's hands, and promised her that at Rocaillet she would find both Mirette and yourself to welcome, guide, and succour her in every way. Have no fear, my dear Arribas, you may open wide your parsonage gates—*Attollite portas principes vestras*, as we used to sing in the choir—'tis a saint that Heaven is sending you.

"And now three lines on an entirely personal matter. Why should you not take advantage of the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol's presence at Rocaillet, to go down at dawn to some corner of the Cérisoles brooklet and lime half a dozen goldfinches for my benefit? The young birds have grown up by September, and the old ones are superb about vintage time in our parts.

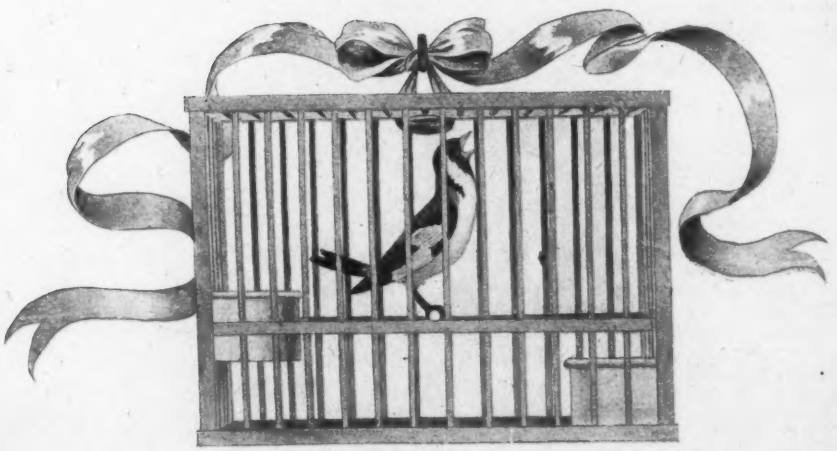
"Don't let me have any objections about the stiffness of your legs, which I know are not the young kid's legs you used to have, or about the weakness of your eyes, beginning to be troubled, I dare say, by the dimness of years. The Abbé Guillaume, to whom I have given a hint as to my fancy, appears quite prepared to give you the aid of his arms and eyes for this little bird-hunting expedition on my account. Here, in my exile in this huge building of the Institute, I long for my country-side; give it me, in its most amiable, its most graceful form, the form that has wings and music. Some time ago, you spent a week in Paris, and nicely put out, fatigued, and flurried you were! Just fancy if you had remained shut up there for thirty years and more. Have pity. I want to hear 'the suave sound of the birds' spoken of, the vicar of

Saint-Germain-des-Prés tells me, in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Wisdom, *avium sonus suavis*.

"Talking of the Abbé Guillaume Birgassol, I must not omit to recommend him to you. Observe him closely. There are, to my mind, few ecclesiastics of such distinction. I see his vocation plainly written not only in his discreet bearing, but in his speech at once firm and gentle, and in the cultivation of a mind capable of scaling heights of thought. Who knows if, one of these fine days, the son of this coal-seller in the Rue Visconti may not wear the mitre? Assuredly, there would be nothing very extraordinary in such a thing. Was not Urban IV, who wore the tiara, the son of a cobbler of Troyes?

"I embrace you, my old friend of the Cévennes, and I embrace your cousin Mirette too, if she won't cry out too loud."

FERDINAND FABRE.





A SOLDIER'S REMINISCENCES (*)

As we marched along the railroad, trains full of troops, horses, and stores, overtook us continually. Our men looked with envy on the waggons which passed so close to us, and at the doors of which the horses' heads could be seen.

"See what a fuss they make over those animals, while we have to walk."

"The horse is a brute which may sicken, and so has to be looked after," replied Wasili Karpitch, "while you are a man and have to look after yourself and keep in good condition."

One fine day, during a halt, a Cossack galloped up to our chief, bringing evidently some important intelligence. We had to get up and form into line, without knapsacks or arms; with nothing but our white blouses. Nobody knew the cause of this. The officers inspected the men; Wenzel as usual shouted and swore, pulled the men by their sleeves if their blouses were badly put on, and knocked them about to teach them

(*) See *Art and Letters* for July, 1888, vol. III, page 59.

to dress with more care. We were led along the embankment, and after various manœuvres, the regiment was drawn up two deep, the line of white blouses extending for about a verst along the rails.

"My boys," cried the Major, "the Emperor will pass!"

Accordingly we prepared for him.

Our division was one of the least known, having been cantoned at a distance from both St. Petersburg and Moscow. Hardly one-tenth, if so many, had ever seen the Czar, and all awaited with impatience the coming of the imperial train. Half an hour passed, and as the train had not arrived, we were allowed to sit down again.

Conversation and anecdotes went on apace.

"Will he stop?" asked one of the men.

"There's an idea! Why, he would have to stop for each regiment. He will just look at us from the window of his carriage, and that's all we can expect."

"We shall never be able to recognize him among all the generals who are with him."

"I shall know him all right," said another, "I have seen him at Hodinski. He was as near to me as you are," and the man made a movement to indicate how close he had stood to the Emperor.

At last, after two hours' waiting, a little smoke was seen in the distance. The regiment stood up and fell in. The first train carried the servants and the cooks; these latter and the scullions, in white caps, were looking out of the windows, and laughed as they saw us, no one knew why. Two hundred *sagenes* behind, came the Emperor's train.

The engineman, seeing a regiment drawn up, slackened speed, and the train rolled slowly past before the eyes of the men who were eagerly scanning the windows of the carriages. But all the blinds were down. A Cossack and an officer were standing on the platform of the last carriage, and were the only individuals we saw.

The train gradually quickened its pace and disappeared. We stayed a few minutes longer on the spot, and then regained our bivouac. The soldiers were disenchanted and gave expression to their chagrin.

"Shall we ever see him?" they asked.

We were not, however, to be long without seeing him. Before arriving at Plœtchi, we were told that the Emperor would review us there.

We had to file past him in our ordinary marching costume, that is in blouses, dusty boots rusted by the sun, and muddy trousers; with our enormous knapsacks on our backs, and our biscuit bags and bottles suspended by strings. There was nothing elegant or martial about us; we were like simple peasants, the cartridge-boxes and rifles alone indicating that these peasants were going to the war.

We were arranged in a thin column in fours. It would have been impossible to march past otherwise in the narrow streets of the town.

I was walking on the right flank and was doing my utmost not to lose step and to keep in line; and I thought, if the Emperor and his staff were to be on that side, I should pass quite close to them. But casting a glance at my comrade Titkow, who was marching by my side, I saw that his face, sombre and sullen as usual, wore a strange, disturbed expression. I felt that this emotion was contagious, and that it was seizing on me; and my heart began to beat more violently. Then I fancied that everything would depend on the manner in which our sovereign regarded us. What I felt later on, when for the first time I was under fire, was somewhat analogous to my present sensation.

The men walked faster and faster, the step was longer, their carriage firmer and freer. It was no longer necessary for me to look after myself in order to keep time. My fatigue had vanished. One would have imagined that wings had been given to us and were bearing us towards the goal where we could already hear the sounds of music and deafening hurrahs.

I have no remembrance of the streets we traversed, nor can I say whether there were any people to look at us. I only recall the emotion which engrossed all my senses, and my consciousness of the resistless force of that body of men, of which force I formed part. I felt that there was nothing impossible for that mass, that its impetus could not be arrested, that every obstacle must be broken and annihilated by it. Each one of us knew that the man before whom we were about to present ourselves could, by a single word or gesture, alter the course of this

stream, could make us retrace our steps, or could urge us forward against terrible difficulties; and each one sought to detect in his gesture or look that indefinable sign which should restore us to our homes, or send us on to death. "It is you who lead us," thought one and all, "we offer you our lives; look upon us, and be assured we are ready to die for you."

He knew that we were ready to die. He saw the grim ranks of the men, so eager and resolute, who were almost running past him, those rough soldiers so miserably clad; and must have felt that they were being led to death, passive and obedient to another's will. His horse stood motionless, yet pricking his ears to the sounds of the music and cries of enthusiasm. A gorgeous staff surrounded the Emperor; but I remember none of those brilliant cavaliers. I have only one man present in my memory—the one seated on a grey horse, dressed in simple uniform, his head covered by a white cap. I remember his pale, worn face, and how exhausted he looked, as if by the momentous decision which he had had to take. I recall the tears which coursed down his cheeks, and which fell, as all could see, on to the dark cloth of his uniform; I recall the nervous twitching of his hand, as he held the reins of his horse, his lips trembling and apparently forming words—doubtless words of sympathy for those thousands of young men who were going to perish, and over whom he wept.

All this picture appeared and disappeared like a flash of lightning, when, out of breath, not from running, but from an indescribable superhuman enthusiasm, I passed at the double before him, holding my gun in one hand, and waving my shako above my head with the other, I cried with all my might "hurrah!" But I did not even hear my own voice amid the deafening shouts of the others.

It was only a second. Then, for the next five minutes, the dusty streets heated by a torrid sun, the men exhausted by excitement and a sharp run of about a verst, and dying of thirst, the orders of the officers who required that every one should march in proper order and in step—that is all I saw and heard. After having marched two versts further, we quitted this stifling town, and reached the plain where we had to



bivouac; and then I threw myself down on the ground entirely crushed in body and spirit.

***

Laborious marches, dust, heat, fatigue, feet bruised to bleeding, short halts in the daytime, heavy sleep at night, the hateful bugle sounding the reveille at daybreak; and then fields which had nothing in common with those of our own country, and plains covered with thick grass, or undulating with the silky leaves of the maize, or with ripening ears of corn; such was our life. There were always the same faces, the same daily regimental routine, the same conversations, and the same fireside-stories, the same details in the halt in the chief towns, the same gossip about the officers.

As to the future, it was spoken of but seldom, and then reluctantly. Why had we started for the war? What were we going to fight for? We had only a vague idea. And yet some of us had remained nearly six months under the walls of Kichineff, preparing for the campaign. Advantage might then have been taken to explain to the troops the cause of the war they were engaged in; but the authorities had probably found such a proceeding useless. I remember a soldier asking me one day:

"Well, Wladimir Michailitch, shall we soon get to Bokhara?"

For a moment I thought I had not heard him correctly, but when he repeated his question, I told him that the country of which he was speaking was separated from us by two seas, and was four thousand versts away, so that we should probably never get there.

"No, Michailitch, you're wrong. The clerk of the regiment told me that when we had crossed the Danube, we should be in Bokhara."

"But it's Bulgaria, you mean, not Bokhara."

"Bokhara or Bulgaria, just as you please. It's all the same thing."

He said no more, and was evidently displeased.

We knew that we were going to fight the Turks because they had caused much bloodshed; but we wanted to fight them, not exactly on account of the blood which they had spilled, but because they had

disturbed all those enormous bodies of men, who, through no fault of their own, were to undergo the trials of a hard campaign. The Turks had made it necessary to call back the men on furlough, who had quitted family and fireside, and were going they knew not where, to encounter cannon-balls and rifle-bullets. They pictured to themselves the Turk as a rioter and inciter of disorder and tumult whom it was necessary to punish and subdue.

We talked of home, of the battalion, and of the companies, infinitely more than of the war. In our company all was orderly and calm; but among the sharp-shooters matters got worse and worse. Wenzel would not keep his temper, and, owing to an incident of which I cannot think even now, five years afterwards, without pain, the mute hostility against him increased and developed into true hatred.

We had just left a small town and had entered the plain beyond. The regiment which preceded us was already encamped there, in a well-chosen locality, bordered by a stream on one side, and by a wood of tall oak-trees, on the other. It was evening and very mild; the sun was just sinking, and the regiment having laid down their arms was getting ready for encampment. Titkow and I were engaged in putting up our tent, the pole was fixed, and I was holding one of the sides of the tent, while Titkow was driving in the pegs.

"Now then, Michailitch, my boy, pull a little harder!" (He had for some time past used a very familar style of speech with me.) "That'll do."

But at that moment a strange noise, regular as if one were clapping his hands, was heard behind us. I turned round. The sharp-shooters were still in their ranks. Wenzel was shouting at a soldier in an angry tone, and striking him on the face. The man, whose features were contracted, held his rifle on the ground, but dared not move to get out of Wenzel's reach. He was trembling from head to foot; while Wenzel, leaning forward, seemed himself to bend as he struck the man's face, first with one hand, then with the other. All around was complete silence; only the sound of the blows and of the broken; unintelligible words of the commander, who had lost all self-control, could be heard. A cloud passed before my eyes, and I made an involuntary movement. Titkow

understood it, and pulled the piece of canvas which I was holding, violently towards him.

"Stop, you fool, what the devil are you doing?" he cried out. "Why don't you use both hands? What are you about? Where are your eyes? One would think you had never seen anything all your life."

The blows continued, the soldier's lips and chin were covered with blood, and at last he fainted.

Wenzel turned away, and casting, a glance from one end of the company to the other, said :

"If any one takes it into his head to smoke while under arms, I shall thrash him as you have just seen me do that fellow, and more thoroughly. Fall out, you scoundrel! Pick him up, have his face washed, and let him lie in the tent, where he can remain. Dismiss!"

His hands shook; they were swollen and smothered with blood. He pulled out his handkerchief and wiped them; and then left the men, who were silent, yet visibly affected. He began walking rapidly across the ground, with a jerky, nervous step. He was pale, his eyes were bright, and one could see, by the quivering of the muscles of his face, that he was grinding his teeth. He passed quite close to us, and having caught my eye fixed on him, he smiled ironically with the slightest curl of his thin lips, and, muttering some words which I did not understand, passed on.

"Merciless brute!" said Titkow savagely. "As for you," he said, turning to me, "what did you want to do? You wanted to be shot, no doubt. You've only to wait a little, and he'll get paid for it."

"Will they complain about it," I asked, "and to whom?"

"No they won't make any complaint. But let him look out for himself, when he's under fire with us——"

He went on muttering indistinct words, which I feared to understand.

Fedorow who had had time to go in among the sharp-shooters and question them, came up to us and said :

"He tortures his men for nothing at all. Matuchkine, the little soldier, was smoking during the march, and when we halted, he grounded his rifle and still held his cigar between his fingers. Wenzel saw it. Brute!" he continued in a bitter tone, as he threw himself down in the

tent, "the cigar was out, and the poor little chap had evidently forgotten it was there."

A few days later we reached Alexandria, where large bodies of troops were assembled. As we descended the mountain, a vast plain lay before us, covered with white tents, among which we could see the dark masses of the soldiers with the long lines of pickets; and bronze guns mounted on green carriages shone in the distance. Men and officers were parading the town, and through the open windows of dirty, squalid inns, could be heard the plaintive impressive sounds of Hungarian bands, the clatter of plates and dishes, and loud talking. The shops were full of Russian purchasers; the Roumanians, Germans, and Jews could not make themselves understood, and every one was talking his loudest and haggling over the exchange of the paper rouble, the Roumanian language being terribly mangled all the time.

"Will you give me two galagan (two halfpenny), you black imp?" bellows a soldier.

"Will you give me ten copecks? Come, *domnul* (sir)."

"*Ounde echte pochta?* (where is the post-office?)" asked an officer, with his hand to his képi in exaggerated politeness, of a Roumanian dandy. Then he consulted his military guide, a book which had been supplied to all the men. The Roumanian replies, but the officer cannot understand a word, turns over his vocabulary, but is no better off, and thanks his informant with mock civility.

"Heavens! what a wretched people!" cries a soldier. "They have the same popes and the same churches as we, but they don't understand anything." And then, as he offers a shirt to a shop-keeper standing at a stall in the open air, he roars at him: "Now then, will you give me a silver rouble for this? Will you give me, *patron francon*, four francs?"

He pulls out the article, displays it, and the exchange is made to the satisfaction of both.

"Now then, comrades, stand aside. Here's the General coming."

A young General in an elegant surtout and high boots, and with a leather whip worn as a shoulder belt, passes rapidly down the street. His orderly follows him a few steps behind—a man of Asiatic type, clad

in a variegated dressing-gown, and wearing a large sabre and a revolver at his belt, and his head covered by a turban. The General, holding his head erect, and with a careless air and a smile on his lips, looks at the men who stand aside to salute him, and enters the hotel. Ivan Platonowitch, Stebelkow, and I took our seats at a table in a corner of the same room, before a dish of the country, composed of various meats and red pepper.

The room, the walls of which were covered with torn paper, was furnished with a multitude of small tables, and was overfull of people. The rattling of plates, the noise of bottles being opened, the clamour of men for the most part tipsy,—all was drowned by the noise of the orchestra installed in a little recess hung with red drapery. There were five musicians : two violins, scraping away furiously; a violincello accompanying them with deep, uniform notes, and a double-bass booming. But these four were merely to show off the fifth, a young dark-complexioned Hungarian, almost a child, with curly hair, who was seated in front of the others. A strange instrument came out from the collar of his velvet vest, something like the pipes given to the god Pan or the fauns; a series of small tubes of various lengths united together, with the open ends just on a level with the lips of the performer. The Hungarian turned his head, first to the right, then to the left, blowing into the pipes and drawing from them full, melodious sounds, very different from those of the flute or clarionet. By turning his head rapidly to either side, he executed the most difficult passages. Against the confused melody of the stringed instruments, the sounds of these reeds stood out bold and clear, in charming, yet wild contrast. The performer's black greasy hair swept his forehead, which was bathed in perspiration, his face was inflamed, and the veins of his neck swollen.

The General took his seat at a table where were some officers of his acquaintance. Every one had risen at his entrance.

"Keep your seats, gentlemen," he said. This permission was addressed, of course, to the inferior grades, and we proceeded with our dinner in silence.

Ivan Platonowitch ordered a bottle of Roumanian wine, which was

followed by another, and after this second bottle, when merriment had taken possession of his features, and a bright scarlet coloured his cheeks and nose, he broke the silence and said to me :

"My boy, don't you remember one of our first long marches. You had some words with Wenzel, I think?"

"Yes."

"And you caught hold of his arm?" asked the Captain in a strangely serious tone.

When I replied in the affirmative, he drew a long, deep sigh, and his manner became excited and restless.

"You did wrong. It was a stupid thing to do. You see, I don't want to give you a lecture, but your conduct was—— that is, it was against discipline—— Confound it, what was I going to say? Excuse me——"

He was silent, dropped his eyes, and began whistling. I was also quiet. Ivan Platonowitch emptied the half of his glass, and giving me a tap on the knee, said :

"Give me your word that you won't do it again. I understand very well that, for a man who has youthful impulses, it is not easy to be calm. But what can you do with a brute like him? He's a madman. In short, you see——"

Ivan Platonowitch was evidently at a loss to express himself, and after a rather lengthy pause he had recourse, in order to loosen his tongue, to another glass of wine.

"He's not a bad man at bottom," he continued. "The devil only knows what madness possesses him so suddenly at times. You may have seen me knock a man about, but not savagely. If a fool doesn't even know when he has made a mistake, if he's a regular blockhead, what can you do with him? You know, Wladimir Michailitch, that I act then like a father, and although I do sometimes happen to lose my temper, I swear to you that it's not from any ill-feeling towards the men, whilst with that other fellow, one always looks for it. Hi! here!" he shouted to the Roumanian waiter in attendance "*Ochte vine negru,* a little more wine! You see," said he, continuing his subject, "it will end in his being brought up for trial, if nothing worse happens in the

meantime. The soldiers must at last lose patience, and the first time we are under fire—— It would be a pity, for, you know, he's really a brave man, and a good-hearted fellow."

"Come, that'll do," interposed Stebelkow. "What good-hearted fellow could knock his men about as Wenzel does?"

"You should have seen what your good-hearted fellow has been up to lately, Ivan Platonitch," I added; and I told him how Wenzel, a little while before, had been striking one of his men for smoking.

"Ah! yes, that's it. It's always the same, you know," and Ivan Platonowitch got redder and redder, breathed heavily, paused a moment, and began again in the same strain. "In fact, I tell you, Wenzel's anything but a tiger. Which men are the best fed? Wenzel's. Which men are the best drilled? Wenzel's again. In which company are the men least punished? It's always Wenzel's. He never allows any of his men to be tried, unless a very grave fault has been committed. In short, if he wasn't so fond of bullying and striking his men, he would be very much liked."

"Have you ever spoken to him about it, Ivan Platonitch?"

"Of course I have; and we have argued the matter over and over again. 'What would you have me do,' he says, 'are we to make it an army or a militia?' He always makes use of some incomprehensible stuff when he explains anything. 'War,' he contends, 'is so stern itself that, if I in my turn, am severe with the men, it's merely as a drop in the Ocean. Their development is still imperfect—' And then he goes on with such a string of nonsense, that the devil himself would not understand it, but, for all that, he's an excellent fellow. He neither gambles nor drinks, and is very conscientious in his duties; he helps his old father and his sister; and he's a capital companion to boot; and as to information, there's not a man in the regiment who can approach him. For all that, you may mark my words, he will either be court-martialled, or those chaps" (jerking his head towards the window) "will take the matter into their own hands. It's terrible to think of, but it's sure to come. That's my opinion, my boy."

Ivan Platonowitch patted me on the shoulder in a friendly way, then

thrust his hands into his pockets, pulled out his tobacco-pouch, and made a large cigarette, which he put into an enormous amber mouth-piece mounted with burnished silver, on which was engraved the word "CAUCASE." He put it in his mouth, then passed the pouch to Stebelkow and myself, and the three of us began smoking.

The Captain then resumed his interrupted discourse.

"There are really occasions when it is impossible to avoid knocking the men about. They want looking after just like children. For instance, there's Balounow."

Stebelkow burst our laughing.

"What—— what—— Stebelkow!" grumbled Ivan Platonowitch. "Ah! well, this Balounow is an old soldier who's always getting fined. He has been twenty years in the army, and he's never let off for the most trifling fault—— You weren't in our company at the time, but just as we were leaving a village in the environs of Kichineff, the authorities ordered an inspection of the extra pairs of boots. I drew up my men, and walked behind the ranks to see if the tops of the boots were sticking out from the knapsacks, and I saw that Balounow had none :

"'Where are your boots?' I said."

"'I have put them at the bottom, Captain, so as to keep them better,' he replied."

"'You are lying.'"

"'No, pardon me, Captain, they are in the knapsack, done up to avoid the rain,' he says with boldness."

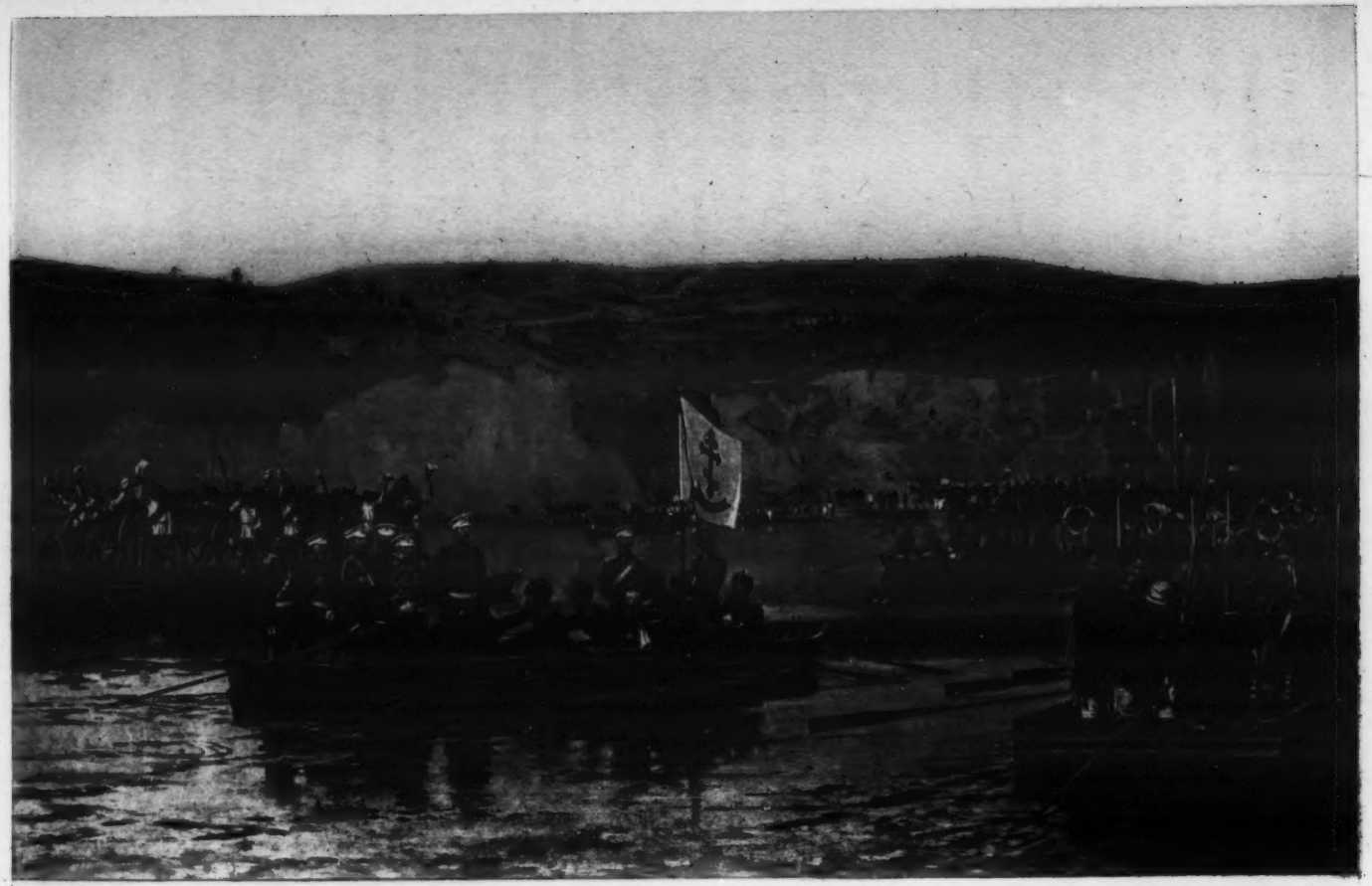
"'Take off your knapsack,' I shouted, 'and unbutton it.'"

"Instead of opening it, however, the dog pulls out the boots by the legs."

"'Now then, why don't you unbutton it?'"

"'But I can get them out without doing that, Captain.'"

"I insisted on his obeying, and what do you think he pulls out of the knapsack? A sucking pig, its muzzle gagged to prevent it squeaking! With his right hand at the peak of his cap, and the other holding his pig, he preserved a respectful, I may even say a dignified attitude."



"'You scoundrel, you've prigged that animal from some Roumanian woman!'"

"And of course I gave him a slight drubbing for it."

Stebelkow was so convulsed with laughter, that it was with the utmost difficulty he could say :

"And I think the pig helped you to thrash him."

"Yes, yes, it did. I snatched it from him, and struck him with it several times."

"But couldn't this scene have been avoided?" I said.

"Come, come, it's miserable to hear you talk. Would you have had me send him to a court-martial?"

* * *

On the 14th of June, during the night, Fedorow woke me, and said :

"Michailitch, do you hear that?"

"What?"

"The cannonade. They are crossing the Danube."

I listened. A strong wind was blowing, and driving along dark clouds which at times hid the moon. The gusts found their way under the canvas of the tents, shaking them violently, and whistled among the ropes and piles of arms. Yet, amid all this, one could hear from time to time heavy, sullen booms.

"Ah! think of the poor fellows falling at this moment!" murmured Fedorow with a sigh. "Must we go there, eh? What a strange noise! It's like thunder."

"It is. After all, it may only be the storm."

"No, no. How can you make that out! Hark how regular the reports are!"

They came indeed at regular intervals. I slipped out of the tent and looked in the direction of the firing, but could see nothing, until, by straining my eyes, I fancied I saw a light.

"So here we are at last," I thought.

And I try to realise what is passing over there in the darkness. I see the broad river with its steep banks and hundreds of boats bearing

our troops. They are being fired at. How many will escape? A shudder passes through me, as I involuntarily ask myself—How should I like to be with them?

I turned and looked at the camp, which was wrapped in sleep. All was quiet there. I could even hear the heavy breathing of the soldiers mingling with the boom of the distant cannonade and the whistling of the wind. And then I wished that things could be otherwise; that there might be no war, that all these men lying asleep around me, and I among them, were not bound yonder where the firing could be heard.

Sometimes the cannonade was stronger, then again I could distinguish a feebler sound which I took to be musketry. I did not know that the Danube was twenty versts away, and that what I thought was musketry only arose from a morbid sensitiveness of the drum of my ear. But the illusion was sufficient to set my brain working, and I imagined terrible scenes. As in a dream, I beheld thousands of men lying on the ground, moaning and groaning, and heard much shouting, husky voices crying out desperately "hurrah!" a bayonet charge, and a fearful slaughter; we were driven back. Was all that loss of life of no avail?

A grey tint appeared in the east, the wind fell, the clouds disappeared, and the stars shone feebly in the paling sky. Day was breaking. The men began to wake up, and those who heard the noise of the firing roused the others. Very few words were spoken, and those in a low tone. We felt we were near the enemy. None could say what the day would bring forth, or dared to think of the morrow. I went to sleep about daylight, and woke late. The cannonade still continued its hollow thundering, and although no news had reached us from the Danube, the wildest rumours were current. Some affirmed that our troops had crossed the river and were pursuing the Turks, others said that the attempt had failed, and that entire regiments had been destroyed.

"Some have been drowned and many killed," said one of the men.

"If you must say something, don't tell lies," rejoined Vasili Karpitch.

"How do you mean—tell lies? It's the truth."

"The truth! Where did you hear it? We all know that they are firing guns, but that's all we do know."

"A Cossack has brought word to the General, and every one says so."

"Oh, a Cossack! Where did you see him, and what was he like?"

"Why, just like any other Cossack."

"Just like any other, eh? You talk like an old washer-woman. Why don't you keep quiet and stop all this gabbling? No one has come, and so nobody knows anything."

I went to see Ivan Platonowitch. The officers were ready, with their coats buttoned and revolvers in their belts. Ivan, as usual, was flushed, panting and perspiring profusely; he was puffing and blowing, and wiping his neck with a dirty handkerchief. Stebelkow was bustling about; he seemed quite pleased, and for some reason or other had dyed his little moustache black and curled it upwards, though generally it hung down.

"Just look at our ensign; see what a swell he has made himself, for the fight!" said Ivan Platonowitch winking at me.

"My poor little Stebelkow, I'm awfully sorry for you. How we shall miss that handsome little moustache! Poor fellow! they are sure to demolish you," said the Captain in a tone of raillery, and yet of sadness, too. "But, anyhow, you're not afraid?"

"No, and I shall do my best to try and not show a white feather," replied Stebelkow resolutely.

"And you, my warrior, are you afraid?"

"I don't know anything about it, Ivan Platonitch," I replied. "Is there no news from yonder?"

"Nothing at all. Heaven only knows what they are doing?" said Ivan Platonowitch, drawing a long breath. "We shall start at one o'clock," he added after a pause.

The sides of the tent were drown apart, and the aide-de-camp Loukine thrust in his face, serious and pale.

"Oh, you're there, Ivanow. I've got to administer the oath to you. Not just now, but as soon as we start. Ivan Platonitch, give out the fifth packet of cartridges to the men."

He refused to come in and sit down, saying that he had a great deal to do, and went away presumably on this other business. I also went out.

At mid-day dinner was ready, but the men had little appetite. After dinner the order was given to uncap the rifles, and the extra cartridges were distributed. The men got ready for fighting, and commenced looking over their knapsacks and getting rid of all unnecessary articles.

Torn shirts and drawers—a heap of rags—were thrown away, with old boots, brushes, and books greasy from long use. It would be impossible to conceive the number of useless objects some of the men had carried with them as far as the Danube. I have myself seen small wooden instruments which, in time of peace, and when preparing for a review, are generally used for polishing the leather straps of the accoutrements, and pomatum pots, small boxes, planchettes, and even boot lasts.

"Throw all that stuff away. You'll march much lighter to the fight without it, and you won't want any of it to-morrow."

"I've carried this old rag with me five hundred versts," muttered Loutikow, "and what is the use of it? I can't take it with me into the other world."

To empty the knapsacks and get rid of everything which was not of prime necessity, became the rage. When we had struck the camp, so many rags and tatters of all hues had the men discarded, that the ground which we had just occupied looked like a square of bright colours on the dark green of the plain.

As we were on the point of moving, when everything was perfectly ready, a few of the officers stood out in front, and with them the young chaplain of the regiment. I was called out of the ranks along with four other volunteers from different battalions, all of us having joined the regiment at the last moment. Leaving our rifles with our comrades, we went and stood near the flag. My new companions seemed excited, and my own heart beat faster than usual.

The commander of the battalion ordered us to touch the flag. The standard bearer lowered it. The old piece of green silk waved in the wind. As we stood in a circle, we held the staff with one hand, and raising the other, we repeated the words of the old formula of military oath of the time of Peter the Great, which the priest read out to us. I recalled to my mind the remarks of Vasili Karpitch on our first day's

march, when, after a lengthy enumeration of the contingencies and situations incidental to the imperial service, in which the words "campaigns," "attacks," "van" and "rear guards," "sentinels," and "baggage," were repeated over and over again, I heard all at once the phrase, "without sparing your life," which we all had to repeat in unison; and as I saw the serried ranks of those men of grave, resolute aspect, I felt they were not vain words.

We rejoined the ranks, the regiment moved forward, formed into a long column, and by a forced march, we pushed on towards the Danube. The firing had apparently ceased.

This day's march seems now all a dream. The dust raised by the regiments of Cossacks which overtook us; the long plain sloping towards the Danube; the further bank of the river, fifteen versts away, seen through a blue mist; the fatigue; the heat; and the struggle near a well in the very surburbs of Simnitza. This dilapidated and dirty little town was full of generals and troops who shouted and waved their hats to us. We did the same to them.

"Hurrah! they've passed. They've passed," cried a thousand voices. "There are two hundred killed and five hundred wounded."

* * *

It was already night when we descended the steep bank of the river. We crossed one of the arms of the Danube by a narrow bridge of boats, and rested on a sandy island which was still moist from the water which had quite recently covered it.

I remember very distinctly the noise of the bayonets as they struck against one another in the darkness, the dull roll of the artillery in our rear, the dark volume of the broad river flowing before us, the fires on the opposite bank, where we were to be the next morning, and where probably another fight awaited us.

"It's better not to think about it, but to get to sleep," I said to myself; and I lay down on the sand which was thoroughly saturated with water.

When I awoke, the sun was already high. Along the sandy shore, troops with baggage trains and parks of artillery were hurrying. They had had time to dig out quite near the edge of the river, batteries and ditches for the sharp-shooters. On the opposite side of the river, we could see on the steep bank orchards and vineyards, and our men swarming among them. Some hills beyond closed the view. On the right, at a distance of about three versts, was the town of Listowa, with its houses and minarets shining on the high ground. A steamboat was towing a barge backwards and forwards across the river, and landing battalion after battalion. On our side, close in shore, we saw the smoke of a small torpedo boat.

"I congratulate you on the successful passage of the river, Wladimir Michailitch," Fedorow said laughingly.

"The same to you," I replied, "although to speak correctly, we have not yet crossed."

"The steamer is coming to fetch us immediately. They say that a Turkish monitor is not far off; but we have a boiler too getting ready for him," he said, pointing to the torpedo boat. 'Good heavens! but what a fight it's been!' he added, suddenly changing his tone. "There is no end to the wounded I have seen them carrying by." And he told me the details, now so well known by all, of the battle of Sistowo. "Now it's our turn, and as soon as we get across, the Turks will be down on us. Anyhow, whatever comes, we have had a respite, we are still alive : while those poor fellows,——" and he nodded his head towards a group of officers and men who had stopped to look at something, which they hid from our view.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"Why, they've brought the dead here. Go and see; but it's an awful sight."

I drew near to the group. All were standing bareheaded and silent. Ivan Platonowitch, Stebelkow and Wenzel were among them. Ivan Platonowitch, with saddened look, was muttering something; Stebelkow, evidently frightened, was stretching his neck over the shoulder of his comrade; Wenzel seemed absorbed in his reflections. Two corpses

were laid out on the sands. One was that of a handsome, tall guardsman of the Finland regiment, and of the company which lost one half of its number during the attack. He had been wounded in the stomach and must have suffered a long time before he died, for the drawn features too plainly showed traces of his agony. His eyes were closed, his hands laid across his chest. Had he so composed himself, or had his comrades laid him thus? There was nothing terrifying or repulsive in the sight, which, however, diffused a profound melancholy. Ivan Platonowitch stooped to pick up the dead man's cap, and read on the peak of it, "Ivan Gourenko, 3rd battalion."

"He was a Little-Russian, poor fellow," said he quietly.

I at once pictured to myself his country, the warm wind blowing over the steppe, the village at the edge of a ravine, the fruit garden, the little cabin plastered with lime, and adorned with red shutters—— "Ah! who awaits your return?"

The other body was that of a man of the Volhynia regiment. Death had been instantaneous in his case. He must have run to the attack, and seemed still in the act of uttering a war cry. The bullet had struck him between the eyes, pierced his brain, and left a black, gaping wound. He lay with his arms spread out, his eyes dull, his mouth still open, his face livid, and the expression stern.

"Their account's settled," said Ivan Platonitch. "They want nothing more."

He turned away, and the men stepped back hastily to let him pass. I followed him with Stebelkow. Wenzel overtook us.

"Ivanow," said he, "did you see those men?"

"Yes," I replied.

"What did you think, when you saw them," he asked.

I felt possessed with a sudden hatred of this bad fellow, and as if I could not reply to him in a friendly manner.

"I think many things," I said, "but what strikes me most is that they are no longer, 'chair à canon,' that they want no more improvement and drilling, and that they will be tortured no longer in the name of discipline. They are no longer soldiers or subordinates," I went on with a quivering voice. "They are men!"

Wenzel's face lightened up. He seemed about to speak, but the words died on his lips. He wanted to reply, but he again checked himself. He walked by my side with bowed head, and, after having taken a few steps without looking at me, he said :

"Yes, Ivanow, you are right. They are men, dead men."

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We crossed the Danube, and remained some days waiting for the Turks in the neighbourhood of Sistowo; then we made for the interior of the country. For a long time we were led, first in one direction, then in another. We had been near Tirnovo and not far from Plevna, but we never got to fighting. In short, we formed part of a detachment whose duty it was to check the advance of the main body of the Turkish army. Forty thousand Russians were spread over a distance of seventy versts, the enemy, about one hundred thousand strong, confronted us. The prudence of our chief, who would not risk his troops, but was content to ward off the attacks of the enemy and the indifference of the Pacha alone prevented the Turks from breaking our ranks and cutting off our main body from the Danube.

We were not very strong in numbers, and the line of our "corps d'armée" was considerably extended. We marched without respite. Through our continually avoiding the various villages, and making frequent deviations on either side of our line of route, in order to evade imaginary advances of the enemy, we at last got so far into Bulgaria that the Commissariat continually lost sight of us, and as our two days' rations of biscuits had to last five days, and even longer, we often suffered from hunger. The starving men thrashed the green wheat on the canvas of the tents, and cooking the grains with the acid fruit of the wild apple trees, obtained a soup which made them all ill, so that our battalions became thinned without having been under fire.

In the middle of July, our brigade with a few squadrons of cavalry and two batteries of artillery arrived at a village abandoned, sacked and half-burnt. Our camp was pitched on a lofty rocky mountain; the

village was beneath, at the bottom of the valley, which was watered by a narrow stream. High abrupt rocks rose on the opposite side, and we supposed that the Turks were encamped there; but this was an error which we did not find out until we had passed some days on the mountain, almost without bread. We had the utmost difficulty in procuring water, having to descend a considerable distance and collect it from a spring which issued from a rock. We were completely separated from the rest of the army, and absolutely without news. In front of us, at a distance of about fifteen versts, the Cossacks acted as scouts, two or three squadrons being distributed over a length of twenty versts. But they saw no more of the Turks than we did.

Although we did not meet with the enemy, our little detachment took all needful precautions. Day and night the camp was surrounded by a close line of outposts, and, owing to the formation of the ground, this line was of considerable length. Every day several companies were told off on this passive, yet fatiguing duty. The inaction, the insufficient diet, the absence of news, and the uncertainty of our fate, told injuriously on the men.

The ambulances of the regiment were always full of the sick, and each day we were obliged to send men suffering from fever or dysentery to the rear in search of the hospitals attached to the division. The companies had only one-half or at most two-thirds of their effective strength. All were anxiously looking forward to an engagement. At all events it would lead to something.

At last this event, so much desired, came off. The chief of the Cossack squadrons sent one of his men to say that, the Turks having made an offensive movement, he had been obliged to withdraw his troops and fall back five versts. It turned out afterwards that the Turks had returned to their former position, not wishing to remain on the offensive. We could quietly have remained where we were; the more so, as nobody had given us orders to march. But the General who commanded us had quite recently arrived from St. Petersburg, and shared our sentiments. The men were suffering from remaining idle and from mounting guard uselessly before a foe who was invisible, or, as some said, imaginary. We were badly fed, and each one awaited

his turn of sickness. All were desirous of fighting, and the General ordered us to move forward.

We had left half the detachment at the camp, and we knew so little of our whereabouts that we might have been attacked from any quarter. Fourteen companies, with the hussars and two guns, moved forward in the afternoon. Never, perhaps, except on the day of the march past before the Emperor, had we advanced with so much alacrity and pride.

We were marching through a valley, passing Turkish and Bulgarian villages completely abandoned. In the narrow lanes, bordered with palings higher than a man, we came across neither inhabitants nor cattle—not even dogs; we saw only chickens, clucking in the road, and these flew away as we approached, taking up their positions on the palisades and house roofs. Geese rose heavily, screaming, as we came upon them, and trying to fly away. We were allowed half an hour's rest in the last village, distant about five versts from where we expected to meet the Turks. The hungry men spread themselves through the orchards, shook the plum-trees, ate an enormous quantity of the fruit, and filled their knapsacks with it. Some of them, it must be said—though their number was small—took care to get some chickens and geese, plucked them, and carried them away. I remembered how, at the moment of crossing the Danube at Sistowo, and in the expectation of a fight, the men had rid themselves of all their superfluous effects, and I made a remark about it to Titkow, who was now occupied in plucking an enormous goose.

"What would you have me do, Michailitch? Although we have not yet seen fire, we have learnt to wait. One might say we are simply walking about. We are playing an even game. As these provisions cost nothing, if one is not killed in the first affair, we shall at all events have something to eat, and it's all profit."

"Have you any fear?" I asked involuntarily.

"Why, after all, it's possible nothing will happen," he said after a pause, winking, and continuing to pull off the last bit of white down remaining on the goose.

"But suppose we had a battle?"

"Ah, suppose we had—— But what's the use of being afraid? We

shall have to march. They won't ask us our opinion. Push on and Heaven help you! But in the meantime pass me your knife, you've got a good one."

I handed him my hunting-knife and he cut the bird in two and held out one of the halves to me.

"Come, take that; it will be of service to you when you want it. As to whether I think things will be dreadful or not, take my advice and don't worry about them. It's all as God pleases. We must submit to His will."

"If a bullet or shell were coming towards us, where would you go?" asked Fedorow, who was lying quite near us. "In fact, Wladimir Michailitch, I think there is more danger in running away, for the bullet describing a trajectory like this," said he, illustrating its course with his finger, "the most murderous fire is on the rear."

"Certainly," I replied, "especially with the Turks; it is said they aim very high."

"All right, Professor," said Titkow to Fedorow, "let us have a little more of your science. We shall know all about trajectories by and by. But it's true, all the same," he continued after a moment's reflection. "It is better to be in front——"

"Behind the commander," said Fedorow. "As to ours, we may be sure he will be in the front, he's a devil-may-care fellow."

"Yes, by Jove, he's anything but a coward, and the German too."

"I say, Titkow, old man, what do you think," asked Fedorow, "will he be alive this evening or not?"

Titkow lowered his eyes as he said :

"Who are you talking of?"

"You know well enough. Have you seen how excited he is?"

Titkow's face grew darker.

"You're talking nonsense," he said in a low voice.

"And what were you always prophesying before we came to the Danube?" said Fedorow.

"Before we came to the Danube—— Ah! when irritated I may have said many stupid things. I know we were worried and had lost all patience. You think, then, they could be guilty of such a crime?"

exclaimed Titkow as he turned and looked Fedorow full in the face. "Do they know what awaits them if they have no fear of God? Perhaps even to-day will they have to render an account of their life; and is it at this time that they should have such a thought! Before the Danube! Yes, yes, I may have said such things myself to this gentleman," pointing to me as he spoke, "it is true I have told him what I had in my mind. What I saw had made my heart bleed. But why do you rake up such things now? Ah! before the Danube!"

He began searching for his tobacco pouch in the leg of his boot, and continued growling for a long time while ramming and lighting his pipe. Then he put his tobacco away, seated himself comfortably, and taking his knee between his hands became absorbed in deep reflection.

Half an hour later, we marched out of the village and began to climb the hill, on the other side of which were the Turks. Arrived at the summit we perceived a large valley, enlivened by fields of maize and corn, and timbered with elm and dogwood. The white, slender, needle-like minarets, rising from the foliage, marked two villages; we had to take the one on our right. Further off, on the horizon, we could see the silvery track of the roadway, which the Cossacks had already taken possession of; but we soon lost sight of it, and entered a wood with a dense undergrowth, broken occasionally by narrow glades. I cannot well recall the beginning of the fight.

As we came out of the wood, we found ourselves on an open plateau commanded by a hill from the top of which the Turks could plainly see our companies issue from among the bushes, form into line, and deploy as skirmishers. We heard a single gun fired; they had just thrown a shell at us. The men started, and all looked with eager eyes at the little white cloud as it descended from the hill. At the same time the loud hissing of the approaching projectile could be plainly heard. It passed over us, but so near that we all bent our heads involuntarily. The shell cleared our ranks and struck the ground by the side of a company in our rear. I shall never forget the hollow sound with which it burst, and the groans which followed the next moment. A fragment had torn away the sergeant-major's leg, but that I only learnt afterwards.



At the time my ear caught the sound, without my thinking of the mischief done. All my thoughts were concentrated in those indefinable sensations which every man has experienced at the commencement of an engagement. It is said that every one is frightened in war. Ask any soldier if he has had such a feeling. If he is candid and sincere, he will reply affirmatively. It is not the same kind of fear which one might feel, if, in a lonely place, he found himself face to face with a robber; but it is the clear, defined consciousness of, as it were, a near, inevitable death. These words may sound wild and strange; yet this appreciation of danger does not arrest the soldiers or prompt them to fly, but, on the contrary, excites them and pushes them on. The sanguinary instincts are not aroused; one's wish is not to go and shed blood, but one is impelled by the irrepressible desire to advance, no matter at what price. And the sentiment which indicates duty at such a moment, is—not to kill, but to die bravely.

While we were crossing the plateau, the Turks had time to fire several rounds. We were only separated from them by the last little wood which extended up to the village. We entered the thicket, and not a word was spoken in our ranks.

Walking became difficult; the briars impeded us in our advance, and we had either to avoid the bushes or beat out a road with great labour. The first skirmishers formed in line and called to one another, almost in a whisper, not to separate. The whole company were now together. A profound silence reigned in the wood.

Suddenly the first rifle was fired. The report did not seem to me loud, but rather like the blow of a wood-cutter's axe. The Turks were shooting at random. The bullets whistled very high above our heads, producing sounds of infinite variety. They went noisily through the bushes, knocked branches off the trees, but did not hit us. The rifle shots became every moment more frequent, and eventually merged into a uniform, crackling sound : it would have been impossible to distinguish the individual hissings, the whole atmosphere seemed filled with them. We hurried on. All those around me were safe and sound; and I also had not been hurt, which surprised me very much.

Presently the undergrowth came to an end. A deep ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a small stream, crossed our path. The soldiers stopped a moment to drink.

When the companies had reached this spot, they dispersed in different directions, so as to take the Turks on their flank, our company being left in reserve at the bottom of the ravine. After having climbed the opposite side, Wenzel arranged his men, and said a few words which I could not hear.

"We will do our best," replied the sharp-shooters over and over again.

I looked at him from below. He was pale, and appeared sad, but calm. Seeing Ivan Platonowitch and Stebelkow, he waved his handkerchief, and seemed to be looking for some one among our men. I guessed that he wished to say good-bye to me. I stood up, so that he might see me, and he smiled and saluted me several times by nodding his head. Then he gave his company the word to march and deploy as skirmishers. The men separated in groups of four, and marched to the right and to the left, forming a long cordon. Suddenly they disappeared among the bushes, with the exception of one man who drew himself up to his full height, raised his arms in the air, and fell heavily, never to rise again. Two of our company rushed forward from the ravine and picked up the body.

We passed a terrible half-hour in ignorance of what was going on. The engagement became hotter, the firing grew more rapid still, and was one long, continuous roll.

The cannon was heard on the right flank. From the bushes, men covered with blood came out, walking with great difficulty, or dragging themselves along on their knees. At first their number was not large, but it increased at every moment. Our men helped them into the ravine, gave them water to drink, and laid them down on the ground awaiting the arrival of the ambulance men with litters. A sharp-shooter, with his hand shattered, was rolling his eyes and groaning frightfully. His features were livid from pain and loss of blood, and he came and sat down at the side of the brook. They bound up his hand, and laid him down on a cloak. Fever shook every fibre of his body, his lips trembled, and he sobbed and cried in an hysterical manner.

"My dear friends, my countrymen!" he kept repeating.

"Are there many wounded?"

"Yes, they are falling like flies."

"Is the commander of the company wounded?"

"No, at present he is all right. If it had not been for him, we should have been driven back. But you will see our men victorious; with him they are sure to gain the day." The wounded man spoke in a feeble voice. "Three times he led us forward, and each time we were driven back. At last, at the fourth attack, we succeeded. They are on the edge of the ravine! Have they any cartridges? They are firing incessantly—— But no!" he suddenly exclaimed with eagerness, moving his injured hand, "you are jesting, you cursed Turk!" And, darting haggard looks in the direction of the enemy, he uttered a fearful oath and fell back senseless.

Loukine appeared at the edge of the ravine, and called out excitedly:

"Ivan Platonitch! Bring your men forward!"

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Then the smoke, the noise, the groanings, the unearthly cries, the smell of blood and of powder, livid features enveloped in smoke, a confused heap of bodies! Thank Heaven, such moments are remembered afterwards but dimly!

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When we came up, Wenzel, for the fifth time, was leading the remnant of his company against the enemy through a hailstorm of bullets; but at this attempt, the sharp-shooters entered the village, and the few Turks who had defended the place on this side took to flight.

The second company lost, in the space of two hours, over fifty men out of the hundred of whom it consisted. Our company, which only took a secondary part in the engagement, lost but a few.

We were not to keep our positions, although the Turks were beaten at all points. When our General saw one battalion after another, a mass of cavalry, and a long line of guns streaming out of the village along

the highway, he got frightened. It was evident that the Turks were not aware of our weakness which had been concealed by the woods. Had they known that fourteen companies, aided by the covered roads, the ravines, and the furze bushes which surrounded the village, had dislodged them, they would have returned and exterminated us. They were three times our strength.

In the evening of the same day, Ivan Platonowitch invited me to take tea.

"Have you seen Wenzel?" he said.

"Not yet."

"See if he is in his tent, and ask him to join us. He's killing himself; the poor fellow does nothing but say over and over again, 'Fifty-two men!' Go and see if you can find him."

A candle-end lighted Wenzel's tent. He was seated in a corner, his head lying on a case, and he was weeping in silence.

VSEVOLOD GARSCHINE.





A WORD ABOUT THE ITALIAN PRE-RAPHAELITES

AND "LES MAITRES FLORENTINS DU XV^{e} SIÈCLE," BY M. LE VICOMTE DELABORDE

It is an article of faith that the painters only of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—and to include the fourteenth, even, is a concession to the weak—had a true idea of form, knowledge of composition, and feeling for nature; not to mention exquisite grace, absorbed contemplation, and a sense of colour which no modern painter can approach. It is an article of faith that they, and they alone, have made thin figures life-like, have placed them in suitable attitudes, and grouped them aright; that they alone have set these living figures in an atmosphere where they can breathe, and that they alone have painted such landscapes as render the "moral significance" of Nature. And because these paradoxes were put forward by such or such a writer, himself, no doubt, sincere, a whole crowd of youths—youths then but white-headed now—tried to keep pace with him, rushed into enthusiasm and raved in poetry.

A school has risen up which knows, confesses and acknowledges none but the Pre-Raphaelites, swears by them alone, and is frantic with all who do not discern in them the crowning effort of the Ideal. They are possessed by this worship because the great So-and-so, their leader, discovered that such worship could become a possession. But as for telling them the reason : Beware!

At any rate this is the case in many minds whose instinct leads them to adore fetiches, being devoid alike of the sincerity which would compel them to deny the faith, and the independence which would prompt them to controvert the creed. At all times there are some who must be guided, and follow their master, to whom the leading of another man's judgment is as indispensable to enable them to hold an opinion as the yoke to enable an ox to draw a cart. Only the ox does not ask for the yoke, and the man has craved for the guidance. Nay more, he prides himself on it, he loves to play flunkey to another mind. Or even if we withdraw the word flunkey and put some better sounding title in its place, is not such a man ready for any servility of body or soul?

And so, without discussion or argument, from a sense of discipline—that it should be called sense!—or mere imitativeness, we are to admire, without questioning and under penalty of many hard words, down to the imitators of the imitators of the early Pre-Raphaelites. To go into ecstasies before shapeless or mis-shapen creatures whose limbs could never possibly move, whose proportions are all wrong, whose action is all unreal. To screw up our eyes and examine imaginary landscapes where washed-out hues do duty for colour, and strips of faded hangings represent the sky, or the sea, the shore or the desert. Instead of trees, and the finest trees ever seen, we are to accept bare broom-sticks which are no longer even green. We are to rave over the grouping of the figures, the philosophy they teach, the ideas they express, when what we see on the canvas is a score of puppets that might have been sketched by a school-boy, stuck into corners doing nothing, and that awkwardly, or strewn about the picture, haggard, halt and speechless, with no sign of a common purpose.

And this, it seems, is very fine. Why? Because it has a grace, a

charm, a mysterious something which is above the common apprehension and which therefore delights—not the painter but the man of letters. For, strangely enough, this infantile art is not much relished by those who are competent to judge it, but almost exclusively by writers who fancy they are doing better service to art by writing prettily about it than by studying it.

The modern Pre-Raphaelites have sinned in another way. Through their friends and admirers they made such a stir that the public has fallen into a habit of judging the original early painters by the standard of their imitators; and again the pictures of the modern "early" school are so huge—and so vacuous—that they almost shut out the real world from our gaze.

But one may be allowed to speak of the early Masters with perfect freedom, without any false enthusiasm or rhetoric, for what, after all, lies at the bottom of the matter? A transition stage of pictorial art, which, by reason of that very transition, betrays a singular hesitancy and, at the same time, many abrupt flights towards a nobler phase of art in the future, and many strange revulsions to the past which still clings to it, holds it, enfolds it, as the chrysalis encloses the butterfly even when ready to fly.

Pictorial art is in its beginning, in every type of civilisation, religious art—Man's endeavour to express in a tangible form his notion of the divine ideal. He gives that ideal the form of man or the form of a beast. If it is that of a beast it appears as a monster, whose hundred heads or hundred hands, and grotesque or enormous proportions are intended to strike terror, and are, in fact, only ridiculous. If the form is human, man by degrees aims at an ideal head, an ideal figure; he presently copies nature and succeeds in presenting a glorified notion of it. This notion, man creates of many parts, designing a creature of which each portion is best fitted to the functions it is to fulfil or the movements it is to achieve, of which every detail, while preserving its adequacy and fitness, is, as nearly as possible, perfect in itself and moulded to the type which comparison and selection have led artists to regard as the most beautiful.

But if the social polity in which this human image of the Divinity has been evoked is ruled by a hierarchy, if—as is commonly the case—the priesthood, besides holding all religious power, administer the secular government or any part of it, they, in order to prevent the abuses which would result from perfect liberty in the presentment of the divine ideal, control that presentment and fetter it with formulas. They insist that the head shall be shown only in profile,—or full face, as the case may be; that the background shall be only plain gold, or blue; that the expression of such or such a personage shall be always the same, that the hands shall be uplifted by a certain rule, and the arms be placed at a certain angle to the body.

We need not go back to the Egyptians or the Chinese or the Hindoos. Their art is too remote from us to have had much influence on the men of central Europe at the beginning of the thirteenth century; still, what has just been said is true of their art, and even more true of Byzantine art. There are to this day nations in which the presentment of sacred personages is hierarchically regulated by traditional types; where there are rules for the character of the heads, the proportion of the figures, the attitude of the limbs, the action of the hands, the colour of the ground and the pattern of the gilding; where the infringement of these ecclesiastical regulations would entail corporal punishment; where the people are so fettered by tradition that, to them, no representations of the Saviour or the Saints can be right but those which conform to the established formula.

And in past ages, until the hour when Italy woke from her sleep of centuries—the hour when, like Juliet, buried alive, she thrilled under the kiss of the sun and her lover's tender greeting—just such a tradition ruled in the Catacombs and in the Basilicas, first tolerated, then authorised, and finally enforced. There is no difference between the Madonna of St. Luke and those of the early Italian artists. The Redeemer, in the primitive mosaics on a gold ground, and in the Icons, is identically the same. But presently a breath of air, wafted over the rich and happy soil, fertile with love and doubt, with dreams and hopes, blew upon Florence and fanned this traditional Madonna; she woke; she cast off

her prim rigidity; she melted into sweetness; she could think and love and live! But that was all. She alone had become human inside the draperies, which had still all the fixity of sacred things. She smiles and thrills us from the grave-clothes with which she is loaded. But how living she is! How completely, through her alone, and by concentrating in that beatified face all the gifts of his genius, the artist succeeded in expressing the infinite variety of tender and human feeling : prayer, love and motherhood! This image of the Virgin Mother, though bound in the sacred trammels of her robes and attitude, rises, soars above them by the expression given to her features. During that interval of transition when no one yet dared to break the mould and throw off conventionality, she was the outcome of the artists' sensibilities, feelings and visions. They believed in her, they loved, revered and adored her, while their brushes wrought the image of the Mother of God, on the white cloister walls, or tenderly painted her features on gilt panels, working in their cells, and sparing of the colours they had ground so laboriously.

But presently pictorial art, quitting the cloister, became worldly, keen, and living; almost scoffing, almost sceptical. Men still believed, but they dared to mock in their cups. There was still enough superstition to frighten them; was there still enough faith to make them pious?

Artists but just set free, and still feeling some respect for the friar's robe they so lately wore, dared not as yet alter the attitude of the sacred figures, but they ventured to trifle with their dress, they re-arranged those conventional folds, and copied real stuffs fabricated by the hand of man; they no longer robed the divine persons in a vague, outlandish shroud, which none but an angel could have woven, since it is beyond the contrivance of human handiwork. So, humanised now, awakened to life, moved by its impulses and showing a various and expressive physiognomy, these hieratic images had undergone a further degradation to humanity in being arrayed in garments like those of men, while the painters, eager to display the technicalities of their art, elaborated their drawing and painting of complicated drapery, and learnt to render the sheen of stuffs with such skill that the texture might be distinguished and called by the name given to it by the weaver.

And then—for artists were not long satisfied with no more than this—as, by degrees, the field opened out before them, painters demanded greater licence, and human vanity claimed its share. A donor was no longer content to place the picture of his favourite Saint on the wall of the family chapel, nor that the Virgin Mother should alone be worthily represented, thanks to his wealth and to the painter's genius. He must have her surrounded with other figures—the Saint or Father whose name he bore; his wife's patron Saint too, his mother's, his sons' and his daughters'. Here of course the painter was more free; he might represent the Saints, male and female, as fancy inspired him; away with conventional attitudes and conventional gestures! He could invent and vary their attributes, finding in these an unlimited opening for design and colour, and introduce raiment of purple and gold, priests' robes, women's jewels, the style of figure he preferred, the stuffs he selected, and the groupings that best suited his purpose. The divine image was still part of the picture—the central idea, if you choose to say so, but surrounded by a halo of accessory figures; and how evidently, face to face with these living, though still motionless, beings, that image was tending to throw off its passive serenity; how distinctly we feel in the rigid statue, within the marble, that the blood is flowing, that the divine spirit is about to burst its bonds—how living it is!

Nor is this all; by degrees, behind the groups thus elaborated, the golden curtain which shut out the world is lifted; we have glimpses of nature, the distant blue horizon, the deserted landscape with a few tiny trees scattered against the perennially blue sky, their filmy branches suggesting children's hair. The effect is monotonously clear and light, hardly differing at first from that of the older backgrounds; but before long we have green forests, towering churches and houses, and a busy world of shepherds with their flock, and a bustle of men and life.

Yet another step. It next occurred to vanity to place the portraits of the donors themselves in front of their sainted patrons. And we still see them, startlingly real and life-like, kneeling in adoration, the father with his sons behind him in a row, and the mother with her girls. In juxtaposition with the ideal, as represented by the Saints, here we have



nature taken in the fact, with no attempt at enhancing its beauties, but just copied literally, in all its ugliness. The artist did not aim at prettiness; on the contrary, he has carefully recorded every wrinkle and wart, every hair, white, yellow or red, with pitiless truth to life. If these men and women could but rise and go about the business of their daily life, behold the two types of pictorial art, no longer placed face to face in the same picture, but divided, and as it were, divorced; on one hand idealistic art, which had its origin in a religious concept, and on the other naturalistic art, of which the very essence is a transcript of life.

If we follow the development of religious art from the stage where human beings are introduced into the work, we soon find that, whereas the donors first figured alone, a whole throng soon comes on the scene. The kneeling worshippers rise, move and gesticulate; a crowd of the damned, with dishevelled hair and writhing bodies, are seen rushing forth, falling, clutching each other, and finally hurled shrieking into the abyss. The frozen images of perpetual adoration have become human as we see them in the presence of the Divinity enthroned in sublime abstraction—struggling like madmen, and falling under the painter's hand into the strangest attitudes conceivable for any creature made of flesh and blood. Every sensation of body or soul, and by preference the most horrible and hideous, has set its mark on those heads; and those limbs, lashed by Furies or—more ruthless still—by Desire and Remorse, are simian in their contortions which might have been devised for a wager by painters in their wildest mood.

Thus we have seen that the religious feeling of the earliest ages gave birth to primitive art; this art, hedged in by the priests of various creeds, became hieratic in its forms, that is to say it was invested by formulas which became fetters and long held it bound; nor after the lapse of nineteen centuries, has it wholly shaken them off. But, it must be remembered, those formulas had once a meaning which they have now lost. Fast bound by them, soaked in their essence, the artist made his figures the transcript of that meaning and so created Idealism. When the age of faith was past he gave greater importance, first to the dra-

peries and then to composition; he invented accessory details and created Naturalism.

Then, not content with the calm, simple action of the human figure as he saw it, he strove to find in an imaginary state of things, the utmost outcome of movement compatible with the structure of the body : he invented angels soaring towards God, and the condemned flung down to the Devils.

But this was no more than learned jugglery ; the soul had fled; the divine light was extinct in the sacred images. The more perfect the art the less religious it becomes ; and, rightly considered, every thing which in our own day, wears the semblance of religious art is merely a more or less successful imitation of early work, indeed of the Byzantine original.

Painting only achieved emancipation—comparative emancipation—after going through an inevitable cycle of development. It did not come to sudden birth at a particular time, by the agency of one particular master, however great his genius, but gradually threw off the wrappings, first of pure dogmatism, and then of idealism, as the ideas of artists tended to greater freedom.

And if, in those early times, painting tarried behind sculpture, is not the reason to be found in the fact that sculpture and plastic decoration never languished under religious laws, while pictorial art, being almost wholly subservient to worship, was restricted by laws which the painters could not infringe? Sculpture had for her province, monuments, façades of palaces and churches, statues, furniture and apartments; covering walls, creeping over pavements, embossing dagger hilts, stamping coins, engraving seals; in immediate attendance on the great, through life and even after death. Sculpture is secular; when it comes into contact with religion, it is of its own free will, but its vitality has other sources. Nothing, therefore, checked its emancipation, nothing fettered it; it went whither it would go.

Besides there were landmarks in plenty to show the way. Masterpieces of antique sculpture came to light, alive as it were, from beneath every clod turned by the plough : sarcophagi, and marble statues, gods

in bronze or in gold; they lay in every furrow, with jewels, and vases, and weapons, and all the thousand things modelled by the conquered Greeks, thus triumphing over Rome.

Consequently sculpture was a fully developed art at a time when painting was still feeling its way. This is conspicuously shown in the plates of a fine work, which is just now being brought out by the Vicomte Delaborde. In this the author (who is permanent secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris), lays down in the preface, which cannot fail to excite discussion, his views of Florentine Art in the fifteenth century. The book contains thirty plates, engraved by M. W. Haussoullier from drawings in the collection of M. Thiers, representing various original works of painting and sculpture.

Look at this tomb of Leonardo Bruni; what force, what originality, what a feeling for nature! In the reduced copy we are enabled to give here we cannot reproduce the harmonious colouring as shown in M. Delaborde's book. And who was the creator of this monument? A certain Bernardo Rossellino. We will not for a moment pretend that he was famous. He was an architect and sculptor; he directed the works of restoration at St. Peter's at Rome, erected monuments at Pienza and Siena, and executed some tombs at Pistoia, but remains, nevertheless, unknown. All the same he was, in the strictest sense of the word, a great artist. There is a perfect simplicity of line, a deep feeling for nature, a wonderful arrangement of ornamental detail to be seen in this tomb, even in the use of colour; for, on the frieze of the sarcophagus, there is a very delicate running pattern in gold, the eagles on their white marble plinths are of pure gold, and the drapery which hangs about the couch of the dead is a very pale blue, with a scroll-pattern of monsters, paler still, in faded yellow, and white just tinted with pink. The pillow under the dead man's head is of white marble, fringed with dull gold, and there are gold clasps to the book he holds in his cold hands. The flesh is all white, intensely white, thrown into relief by the tender, neutral, but purplish red of the base; this, to soften the contrast, is broken by the mouldings of white marble, and divided into narrow panels.

Who was Leonardo Bruni? A secretary of the Holy See under four

successive Popes, Chancellor, too, of the Florentine Republic, and the historian of Florence, for this is the book—*Historiarum Florentinarum, Libri XII*—which the sculptor has placed on his breast. While living, he was respected by his fellow citizens for his great learning, and when he died they crowned him with laurel. It is recorded on his tomb, that History bewailed his loss, and Eloquence was silent; and yet all this is past and forgotten; no one reads the twelve books of his history, and few are they who, unless they have been to the church of Santa Croce at Florence, know the name of Leonardo Bruni; while those who have wandered through that glorious building, have brought away the never-to-be-forgotten memory of the man, immortalised, not by his work, but by his monument.

The Martelli, again, a Florentine family, though glorious no doubt in Florence, would probably have remained unknown to fame if Roberto Martelli had not been the patron of Donatello, and if this master had not sculptured his coat of arms on the front of the palace : Gules, a gryphon or. How fierce, how surly is that monster, and how crushed and lamentable and wretched, as he bends under the weight of the escutcheon hung round his neck, is this marble serf, with jaws gaping to yell with the effort, and a hand clutching the lordly shield. Little of the bust is visible, one arm, and the head; it symbolises an epoch—all the crushed and turbulent suffering of the dark ages. What painter—even Giotto himself, or what pupil of his, would have dared to lend a tongue to nature, as Bernardo Rossellino has done in this pagan tomb, or as Donatello, with his revolutionary chisel, has shown us, on the façade of a palace, a people broken under the yoke of the nobility?

Lovely indeed, and almost divine is Massolino's Virgin; on her knees before her son, the Holy Child, forgetting her own motherhood, and remembering only His Divinity, rapt in a deep ecstatic dream, in which she sees, not her own aggrandisement, but the glorious marvels of splendour foretold to the Infant she gave birth to; lost in worship, which will not venture on the fond caress of a mother, but which elevates the very functions of life to the solemnity of a sacred ministry, the Virgin is praying to the Son of God. And He, the Child, lying happily in the

sun, as it warms and glows upon Him, He, who is man, stretches his little limbs on the hard ground on which He lies, and holds out His tender arms. He wakes to Nature, and Nature is glad; He, too, is glad to live, and smiles on the World which will kill Him—the World He is to save.

This is the idea which forms itself in the mind as we look at this harmoniously coloured picture; but we cannot but feel that the technique is still very defective. And if, as M. Delaborde opines, Massolino da Panicale is to be classed among the *Naturalisti,* the drawing of the figure of the Holy Infant is not such as to do him credit. Also it must be noted that the figure of the Virgin is of the strictly orthodox school; Massolino, who studied, with Giovanni da Fiesole, under Gherardo Starnina, derived the hieratic formulas from that master of tradition, though gradually modified and spiritualised; and he has certainly been bound by them in this picture from the Monastery of Camaldoli.

These three examples taken without prejudice from a very beautiful book, carefully compiled by highly competent judges, are, to be sure, an insufficient basis for the theory I have propounded. It would be well to adduce others, more numerous and more clearly to the point, and to set them before the public; still, with regard to the Pre-Raphaelite movement now so popular in France, and even more with regard to a new school of sculpture which is being much talked about, it is allowable to lay down certain definite principles.

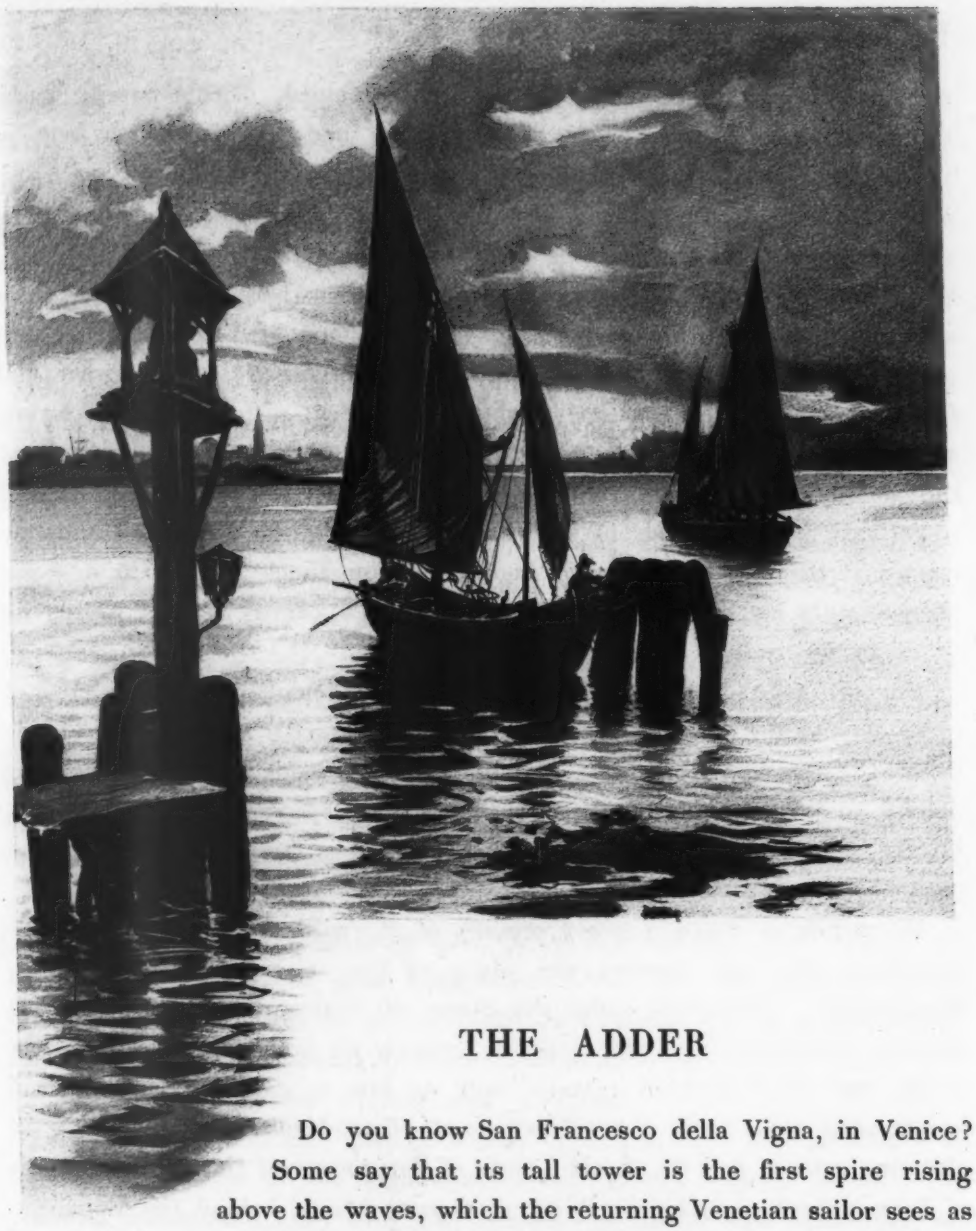
It may be said that the art of sculpture developed earlier than that of painting; but that, being limited as to the forms it could adopt, and restricted by its very nature to the representation of the human figure, inapt to give a transcript of fleeting impressions, incapable of rendering movement, or accessory circumstances, this art, which was the first to develope and ripen, could get no further—and never can, strive as it may; while the sister art, stifled and bound in its infancy, making its way but slowly in its hieratic swaddling clothes, and freeing itself by degrees from their swathing folds, gasping for air, waking to the splendour of day, and cautiously casting off, one at a time, the thick shrouds which blinded it to the beauties of nature, now has the wide world before it.

For painting as well as for sculpture, everything lay ready almost from the first. The various forms it may assume, are fixed, and within its grasp. Naturalism is as real a thing as Idealism. But in painting, everything has the gift of renewal; everything fluctuates and changes. Hence, too, everything is as fugitive as colour itself; and while statues of bronze, of marble, or of stone, defy time, and survive the touch of ages without betraying any weakness, Mona Lisa's eyes are gradually fading into ghostliness, and the Disciples on the walls of Santa Maria delle Grazie are vanishing into shades.

All that appeals most nearly to the eye of man, and speaks most distinctly to his soul, must be the first to fade, and flee away. Thus it is with the opening blossoms, which lie one morning like snow on the apple orchards of our valleys, and are swept away by the hoar frost of the next.

FRÉDÉRIC MASSON.





THE ADDER

Do you know San Francesco della Vigna, in Venice? Some say that its tall tower is the first spire rising above the waves, which the returning Venetian sailor sees as he comes homeward from the south-east, over the foaming bars of Chioggia and Malamocco, one slender shaft rising against the sky, calling him back to his city and his home : all the men, who come and go over the Adrian waters, have an especial tenderness, an especial reverence, for Saint Francis of the Vineyard. There is no vineyard now; only one small square garden,

with a cloister running round it, arched, columned, marble paved, where the dead lie under the worn smooth slabs, and the box-edges hem in thyme, and balsams, and basil, and carnations, and thrift, and saxifrage, and other homely hardy plants that need slight care. The sea winds blow strongly there, and the sea fogs drift thickly, and the steam and smoke of the foundries round about hang in heavy clouds, where once the pavilions and the lawns and the terraces of the patricians of Venice touched the grey-green lagoon; but this garden of San Francesco is still sweet and fresh : shut in between its marble colonnades with the deep brown shadow of the church leaning over it, and the chiming of the bells, and the melody of the organ rolling above it in deep waves of sound, jarred sometimes by the clash of the hammers falling on the iron and the copper at the foundries near at hand, and sometimes sinking to a sweet silence, only softly stirred by the splash of an oar as a boat passes up or down the narrow canal.

For the sake of that cloistered garden, a gondola came one summer every day to the landing-place before San Francesco. The artist Claude Dorat had seen it, and liked it, and came to paint from it every day, finding an inexpressible charm in its contrasts of gloom and light, of high brown walls and low-lying graves, of fresh green herbs and flowers, and melancholy immemorial marble aisles.

He meant to make a great picture of it, with the ethereal Venetian sky above all, and, between the edges of box, a solitary monk pacing thoughtfully. Dorat was under the charm of Venice : that subtle dreamy charm, voluptuous and yet spiritual, which no artist or poet ever can resist, and these summer months were to him a vision of languor, and beauty and rest, with the white wings of sea-birds, and the silver of gleaming waters, and the festal figures of Carpaccio and the golden warmth of Palma Vecchio, and the glories of sunsets aflame behind the Euganean hills, and the mystery of moonless nights, with the tide washing against the weed-grown piles of a Madonna of the lagoon, were all blended in that confusion of past and present, of art and nature, of desire and repose, which fills the soul and the senses of those who love Venice, and live in thrall to her.

Dorat was young enough to feel this spell profoundly, and old enough to be glad that he could feel it, to welcome it as a lingering breath of youth, as in the heat of the midsummer nights he welcomed a stray breeze blowing down from the Paduan hills, across the still waters by Murano. In Paris he was famous, wearied, feverish, sated : in Venice he was a student still, a pupil still, a lover of all lovely things, content to sit at the feet of Titian and Giorgione ; happy to dream his days away, where silver sunlight poured through a canopy of vine-leaves, on a group of naked children, playing like young dolphins in green water, or a fleet of boats, red, yellow, orange, ruddy as so many flames, glided by a grassy isle, or ruined marble mole.

In Paris he could not live a day without all the refinements and ingenuities of what some call vice, and some call pleasure; in Venice he was content merely *de s'écouter vivre,* dreamily, and harmlessly, penetrated with that divinity of beauty, which is the very life-blood of the true artist, and that humility which alone contains the germ of greatness.

"Je me sens si jeune ici," he wrote to a friend in Paris : "Je me retrempe corps et âme dans cet air pur, dans ces eaux ensoleillées. Laissez crier les gueuses et les cabotines, je n'ai pas besoin d'elles; j'ai la Sainte Barbara qui se donne à moi."

So he had come to the cloister of San Francesco every morning for a fortnight, to pourtray its cool greys and browns, and whites, its simple green leaves, its poor lonely monks, he who was wont to enrapture Paris with pictures of nude women, and daring visions of Greek and Egyptian orgies, and scenes of oriental sensuality, and strange landscapes burning with the scorch of Asia and of Africa.

He meant to call this picture merely "Le Passé." The pavement of tombs, the shadow of the high church, the homely fragrant flowers, the peaceful colonnades, did they not embody in them, and symbolize all that the modern world has lost of silence, of leisure, of simplicity, and of faith? He had no faith of any sort, but he envied those who could still bask in its illusions : and in a solitary country house, upon the dreary moors of Morbihan, with stormy seas boiling between black rocks and long winters enshrouding the cruel coast in mist and snow, his

mother, a lone woman, prayed for him night and day. All his great triumphs had been but as forecasts of hell to her superstitious piety, and on none of his works had her pained eyes borne to look : this picture of the past should be painted for her, he thought, since to her as to the monks, the past was still a present and its legend a reality.

It was the harmonious proportions of its colonnades and the subdued sweetness of colour in its garden which had drawn him thither; of its symbolism he had only thought later, one day when the chaunting of the boys within the church had come to his ear; they had been singing from a mass of Palestrina's. It is only in the old obscure churches, of old historic towns that one can still hear all the beautiful music of the old masters, whose scores lie dust-covered, yellow and moth eaten, neglected in organ lofts and sacristies, their melody mute between the leaves, whilst the world runs after the braying chords and borrowed motives which have dethroned melody.

It was August, and August is very warm in Venice; all that wide shadeless plain of shallow rippling sea draws down and reflects tenfold the sun, as in a mirror, and there is no retreat from it except inside the water-gates of the palaces or behind the leathern curtains of the churches : out of doors, everywhere, even under the deep vault of the Rialto bridge or under the drooping trees of San Trovaso the strong heat penetrates; and here, in the cloister of Saint Francis at noonday, Dorat, who had ceased to paint because the light was too strong and who was unwilling to leave the place as yet, felt his eyelids grow heavy and his hand slow to obey him.

All things invited to repose; the cool marble parapet of the cloisters, the drowsy hum of the bees rifling the stocks and carnations, the monotonous chaunt of the choristers repeating their lesson, the silence which prevailed everywhere else, for at mid-day the foundry hammers ceased; and Dorat resisting his indolent impulses but a moment, strolled to the cloister on his left, and threw himself down on the marble ledge in the shadow. There he, in another moment, fell asleep; the hum of the bees and the hymn of the choristers lulling him to slumber, as a song sung low lulls a child. Soon the chaunting ceased, and all was completely

still. There was no life except his own and that of the bees in the little garden; the monks were mumbling over their mid-day fish and bread in their refectory; the sun poured down on the brown brick wall of the church, and the flowers drooped under the strength of its rays. Dorat slept on for more than an hour : his head on his arm, his limbs outstretched, handsome as the Antinous of Canova, but pale from the habits of his life, and indolently posed, in his complete unconsciousness.

From a crevice in the marble beneath him a little head peeped out, not the gay, green, innocent, frolicsome shape of the lizard, but the wicked black head of an adder. In these old walls all manner of poisonous as of harmless creatures dwell, and no seat or couch is more dangerous than those which an old wall in Italy offers to the tired and thoughtless traveller.

All snakes, large and small, love the noon sun; and this adder came out after the manner of her kind allured by the basking heat. Did she know what she did, or did she not know? Who can tell? Man knows what he does when he slays; but these others—who can say that they know what they do? She looked out of her hole and enjoyed the great heat which fell on her flat head; and then she emerged more fully into the light, and saw the hand of this man which hung down over the ledge of marble and lay idly on the ground; the slender, supple, delicate hand of the artist which creates beautiful things and has power in all its fingers to call up visible scenes from worlds unseen by his fellows. Then it seemed good to the adder to touch this hand, and she crept close to it on her belly and wound herself carefully round it and upward to the wrist. But her touch and her clasp were so light that the sleeper did not awaken, and she drew her head back as a child recoils before making a leap, and darted her tongue out like a little arrow of death.

But before it could reach and penetrate the flesh, another hand seized her by the throat, gripping her so tightly that she could not move, and threw her on the ground, and then with a stone killed her. The noise of the stone falling on the marble pavement awoke Dorat; he raised himself on his left arm and looked with astonished eyes up into the white warm light above him.

"Santa Barbara!" he murmured; for the woman who stood above him resembled that picture which he loved, and which he had gazed on that morning for the hundredth time where it hangs in the shadow of the side altar in the church of Santa Maria Formosa.

"It is bad to sleep upon old walls, they harbour dangerous beasts," said the woman gravely in the soft Venetian accent. "See, Signor, I killed her, or very surely she would have killed you."

"You have done me a service indeed; I was asleep and dreaming of Santa Barbara," said Dorat; he was still but half-awake and he looked dreamily at the little black crushed adder lying on a piece of white marble. Was it possible? One touch from that small creature, one drop of venom from its tongue, and all the power of his brain and cunning of his hand might have been dulled and dead for ever!

The idea seemed so strange to him that he was absorbed by it for a moment. The next, his eyes still dim and heavy with slumber in the heat, saw only the face of his saviour, a face like the Santa Barbara's; of the old noble warm-hued Venetian type with strength as well as beauty in its lines, and dusky golden hair, and a mouth like a carnation. She was a woman of the people, she had a black shawl worn over her head as Venetian women so often wear one; a linen bodice and a woollen skirt; but these poor clothes could not conceal the magnificent lines of her form and the mingled grace and strength of her limbs; whilst her throat and bosom and arms were those of Veronese's Europa.

"All the types in one!" he murmured to himself, feasting his eyes on this incarnation of womanhood till the ardour and abstraction of his gaze called up a vivid blush over the cheeks and brows of the young matron who, half-offended, half-diverted, frowned and laughed and turned away. "By the Virgin how you stare 'llustrissimo," she murmured as she drew her shawl closer about her breast. "It is well for you that my man is away over the seas."

The homely words recalled Dorat to himself; he rose and thanked her warmly for the service she had done him, and begged to know to whom his debt of life was owing.

"I am Veronica Venier and my husband is Zuan Tron," she answered.



"Yes, Venetians both, what else should we be? I live close by, in the Campiello dei Merli, where the well is with the marble angels; they say it is very old and people come and sketch it. You are a painter too?"

"I am," said Dorat, "and I may come and see the well with the angels?"

"Surely, it is in the Campo; it is not mine. Any one may see it. But why do you lie and sleep here? Why are you not at home if you wish to sleep?"

"The heat overcame me, and but for you I might have wakened from my siesta only to sleep for ever in the grave. May I ask how you came here, in a monkish sanctuary?"

"I came to bring some linen to Cattina, the sacristan's wife; and she gave me leave to gather some lavender; I often come here; the monks say nothing."

"They would indeed have ceased to be men if they could object!"

The calm deep blue eyes of Veronica gazed at him without any comprehension of the compliment.

If she seemed like Barbara and Europa to him, he seemed to her a being of another world, so delicate, so slender, so sweet-voiced, so unlike the gondoliers and boatmen and sailors who made up her family and her neighbourhood and her world. She stood a moment, reflecting, in the hot sunlight with her bare feet on the marble pavement and the tawny gold of her coiled hair burnished in the light. Then she stooped and picked up a bundle of lavender which she had dropped when she had seized and stoned the adder, and nodded her head in farewell.

"Do not sleep on old walls again," she said carelessly; and turned to leave the cloister.

"Wait a moment," murmured Dorat, "tell me where I can find the Campiello?"

"Three turns from here to the left by the canal, and then two to the right; you cannot miss it."

"And take this," he added, as he slid his watch into her hand, "take this, to remind you that I owe it to your courage and presence of mind if time has not wholly ceased to exist for me."

She took the watch and gazed at it in astonishment; it was a gold chronometer of great value; but after looking on it in admiration for a moment she put it back to him.

"I want nothing," she said with some coldness. "You owe me nothing either; and if Zuan were to hear that I took payment for doing my duty he would give me the rope's end when he came home."

"The brute!" muttered Dorat, but he did not force his gift or his presence on her.

"I will give you some other memorial of this morning," he said with tender grace as he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it reverently. That action surprised and pleased her; she felt the homage of it and its difference to the rough wooing of Zuan Tron.

"Addé!" she said to him, drawing her hand away; and with her sheaf of lavender in her arms she went out of the cloister. He let her go, watching her superb walk as she passed through the garden with that mingling of poetic analysis and of sensual desire which, together and inseparable, characterise every artistic temperament.

He was accustomed to leave his easel and canvas and colours with the sacristan of San Francesco; when he left them there this day an hour later, he questioned the old man as to the history of Veronica, the wife of Tron. The man had little to say, she was the daughter of Ruffo Venier, a worker at the smelting-house; Tron was a common sailor in a coasting-brig, they were poor folks; she was not twenty years old; she had had one child, it was dead, she was a handsome wench, but there were others as good to look at, and in the Campo the neighbours thought that she gave herself airs; what sort of man was Tron? well enough, honest, hard-working, good in his way, but violent and apt to be jealous; he had only sailed two days before for Greece; those brigs were slow but sure. Then the sacristan pocketed a fee and took in the easel, and a little later said to his wife that Veronica had saved the foreigner from an adder's bite.

"More fool she," said his wife, "we never do a stroke of good in this world but what it turns against us and comes back and bites us."

"That is true," said the sacristan washing Dorat's brushes, "but,"

he added with a chuckle, "this adder will be more likely to bite Tron this time."

In the afternoon Dorat walked down the street of the Merceria, that busy, crowded, narrow alley which has some look and sound of the bazaars of the East in its colour and confusion, and entered a jeweller's shop well known to him; a dusky den where gold and silver, coral and agate, pearls and diamonds, and all kinds of filagree work in precious metals shone and gleamed in the deep shadows.

Thence he selected a necklace of great price from its purity of ore, and rarity of workmanship; a gold serpent so flexible that it curled like a living snake and seemed almost imbued with life as its emerald eyes sparkled in the dark. He paid for it and put it loosely in his pocket, refusing the case in which the jeweller wished to enclose it. Then he went to his gondola waiting at the water-steps between the pillars of the Piazzetta. An hour or two later, as the heat of the day cooled, he had his gondola moored to the ring in the landing stair of the Campiello dei Merli, an abandoned little square, one of those green places where, in the Venice of old, the citizens used to keep their sheep; surrounded now on three sides by palaces gone to ruin, and having in its centre the well with two kneeling angels of which she had spoken, which was said or supposed to be the work of Tullio Lombardo.

Poor people alone occupied these once noble houses; their rags of many colours fluttered from the ogive windows, and half-naked babies tumbled in numbers on the short turf. His Barbara, his Europa, lived here! To Dorat used to luxury and ease it seemed an outrage against nature and against art, that a creature so beautiful should dwell in such squalor and in penury, with all the meagre and dull atmosphere of poverty.

"Can I see Veronica Venier, the wife of the sailor Tron?" he asked the people of the Campo who had come to gaze at him; they answered yes, and her name abbreviated into 'Nica! 'Nica! awoke the echoes of the old dilapidated walls. She came in answer out of an arched stone portico, her head uncovered, shading her eyes with her hand from the blaze of the sunset light; he thought that she had expected him, for her

clothes were of a better kind than those which she had worn in the morning, and in her breast there was a knot of red carnations.

"I have come to see the angels of the well," said Dorat softly, "and also to bring you this little thing in memory of to-day."

She was leaning against the marble side of the well, and the neighbours and children were gathered round, staring and listening as he, with a sudden movement which took her utterly by surprise, clasped the golden snake about her throat.

"Ah!" she cried quickly, and with a quick rush of blood under her fair skin which made her beauty much greater.

Dorat, turning to the neighbours, said : "She saved my life from a snake this morning, is it not fit she should wear its *souvenir?* And snakes bring good fortune, they say."

"Good fortune, indeed," grumbled an old crone, "if they hang your neck about with gold."

Veronica, raising her arms, tried to unclasp the gold snake from her throat, but in vain, it had closed with a spring and her fingers could not find its secret. Dorat, smiling, stood and watched her unavailing efforts.

"Do not be unkind to me," he murmured, "it is but a trifle, a toy; keep it, I entreat you. It has a grander place there than if it were on the throat of any princess. Keep it in memory of me."

Veronica stood irresolute; a beautiful figure with her raised hands still behind her throat, and shadows of longing, of irresolution, of pleasure, of fear, of embarrassment and of natural pride, all passing over her expressive countenance, while the children hung on her skirts to stare, and a clove-pink fell from her breast on the stones. Dorat stooped and took up the flower. Then, being an unerring artist in these things, he gave her no chance to repent or to refuse, no opportunity to debate or to protest, but bowed low to her as to any great lady, and left the Campo while she still stood irresolute, the golden adder clasped about her throat; the children and the women clamorous around her, and on either side the angels of the well kneeling with folded wings as the sculptor had placed them three hundred years before.

Veronica stood there as in a dream, listening to the soft plash of the gondolier's oar as he descended the narrow side-canal, now tinted with all colours and glowing with the crimson reflections from the western skies.

The carnation dropped from Dorat's hold into the water as he shifted the cushions to stretch himself at ease.

Poor women in Italy often possess jewellery that is both good and handsome, as their heirlooms, or marriage portions, but Veronica came of people too poor for her to own anything more than the silver ear-rings which Zuan Tron had given her on her bridal day. Her father and brothers were all workers in one of the smelting furnaces; and Tron was but a sailor who brought home little from his voyages; she had a room or two which she shared with Tron's sister, and she made a little money for herself by washing linen. Her name was the old ducal name of the Veniers; and, may be, she had their blood in her; may be her ancestresses had worn the pearl-sown robes and golden *bugole* of Dogaresse, and gone in state to hear mass at San Marco, but if so it was all lost under the accumulation of the centuries and in the darkness of ignorance and poverty. She was only a poor sailor's wife; a woman who beat linen with wood in the canal-water and hung it on a cord to dry.

Therefore the golden adder made her heart leap in her bosom with elation and triumph; and yet—and yet—she was a proud woman; and an innocent woman; it was not well for her to keep it, she knew that. When she unclasped it from her throat at night, she laid it on her pillow; and all the night she could not rest. It was a night of rainless storm; the heavens were filled with lightning; and the vivid flashes came through her unshuttered casement, and lit up the little snake with its emerald eyes, as it lay on the rough hempen pillow where the rude head of Zuan Tron had so often reposed. With the morning she slipped the necklace in her breast and went out, and finished her washing and spread the linen on the stones of the Campo to dry.

Then when it was noonday she took her way to the cloister of San Francesco. Dorat was again there painting; he saw her entrance with a smile; he mistook her errand; he felt a passing irritation, a vague distaste; he did not care for a woman who offered herself.

"She might have waited," he thought as he rose with some words of welcome and flattery.

But she did not heed his words; she took the gold adder out of her bosom and held it towards him.

"It is beautiful," she said with a hot colour in her cheeks, "but it is not for me; give it to your *dama;* I want no payment."

Dorat was so surprised that for an instant he was silent, gazing at her in stupor; a woman forego a jewel!—she could not be earnest.

"I will not take it," he said angrily, "it is yours. Throw it in the canal if you choose," then as the sun shining on her, showed him the full splendour of her fair skin, her burnished hair, her flower-like lips, his tone melted and changed, and grew passionate, and supplicating: "Keep it, keep it, not in payment, in remembrance. Did you not save my life from that little poisonous black beast? I have no *dama;* all women that I have ever possessed are as nothing now that I have seen you. Do you know how great your beauty is?"

Veronica heard him with a vague terror, but with a strong confused sense of power and of pleasure. Men had told her often of her beauty; but not in this way, in these words.

"I cannot take it," she repeated with embarrassment, clinging to that one idea which had brought her thither, and powerless to express her feelings as the uneducated almost always are.

"I cannot take it. Tron would see it when he comes home and he would be jealous and would beat me. I came only to bring it back, because you are a stranger and I know not where you dwell, or where you lodge even here. There is no need for you to have any gratitude, I merely took the little beast off your hand, Cattina would have done the same had she been near."

Dorat looked at her in silence; he wondered if her rejection of it was sincere; he believed but very little in the words of women.

"If you be too proud to take a gift from me," he said with affected mortification, "will you be content to earn it? You can do so easily."

Her large calm eyes, the eyes of the Santa Barbara, lightened with pleasure and expectation.

"Earn it? But I could never earn it! you mean I suppose by washing your linen, but it would take years."

"No : you can earn it in a week, if you will."

"How?"

Unconsciously to herself, her whole face spoke the wistfulness and eagerness of her longing for this toy; her breath came and went rapidly; her whole form seemed tremulous with a childlike, yet passionate desire."

"Let me make a portrait of you," said Dorat simply.

"Of me, but I am nothing!" she exclaimed in her ignorance and her surprise. "Why should you want to make a picture of me?"

Dorat smiled, he saw her words were quite sincere.

"Because you are a beautiful woman," he answered, "you do not seem to know it or to care about it, but it is so. If you will come to me a few hours, now and then, you will have more than earned the necklace, since you wish to earn it; and your husband when he sees it, will have no cause to blame you. Will you not do this little thing for me?"

"Perhaps," she said slowly and doubtingly, for the idea was strange to her; she was of the city of Tintoretto and of Titian, but of pictures she knew nothing, though she knelt before them sometimes and said her prayers.

"You wish me to come here?" she asked.

"Here at first if you please," said Dorat, and he looked away from her as he spoke, "but afterwards you must come to my studio. I cannot finish a portrait in the open air."

"But you are making this picture of the garden in the open air?"

"This is different. Tell me, will you let me paint your portrait? Just as I saw you first, standing with the sun shining about your head and the sheaf of lavender lying at your feet. All the great world shall see it, and will see in it that the women of Palma Vecchio and of the Veronese live still in Venice."

She was silent; the world conveyed no sense to her; she had never been farther over the waters than to the island of Mazzorbo when the fruit was ripe, and, though she was a mariner's wife, she did not understand what other countries and other nations meant. But she understood that Dorat thought her beautiful; and she would not have been a woman

born of a woman if she had not felt the thrill of that consciouness in her innermost being.

"You will come?" said Dorat softly.

"Yes," she said slowly, "I will come."

"And you will keep the necklace?"

"Not till I have earned it."

From that resolution he could not move her; she would not take the little golden snake till she had earned it, though her whole soul sighed for it. He had perforce to let her go that day, for she was in haste, being wanted by her sister-in-law.

"You will come back to-morrow?" he asked her persuasively.

"Yes, to-morrow," she said calmly and then with her, "Addè S'gnior," she went away from him across the sunlight down the arcade of the cloister.

Dorat watched her with languid eyes, amorous and yet cold; he was a man who could wait. He put the gold adder in one of the drawers of his colour-box; one day very soon it would be round her throat; what matters a day sooner or a day later when one is certain to succeed at last?

And yet the calm, noble simplicity of her in her strength and beauty sank with a certain profoundness of impression into his mind, sated, selfish, and sensual though it was. "She is a grand creature," he thought, "despite all her ignorance and poverty, and her frankness of desire for that jewelled toy."

He painted very little that day, but sat and dreamed, in the sweetness of the garden, dreams of things which his youth had desired, and the visions of which had been hustled and hurried away by the rush of those passions and follies, and ambitions and achievements, which had filled his years since the world had made him famous.

"Santa Barbara sera bientôt à moi," he murmured, recalling the words of his letter to his friend.

And within a yard or two of him the little dead body of the adder lay under the saxifrage leaves whither the sacristan had swept it with his broom the day before; a sun-dried, wrinkled, shrivelled little thing looking like a small burnt branch, a shred of leather. Its work was done.

The picture of the cloister and the garden was put aside, and

waited with its canvas turned to the wall in the sacristan's room.

The portrait of Veronica grew in its stead; a portrait taken in the fulness of the daylight, with that strong sunshine shed over it in which Dorat excelled; the marble pavement under her feet, the rosy saxifrage and the yellow tiger-lilies behind her, and above all the blue sky with boughs of oleander in red blossom crossing it.

"The pose is a little too much Santa Barbara's, and the *pâte* a little too much Cabanel's," thought Dorat, who was quickly hypercritical before his own creations. But it was beautiful, and it was not the picture that he most wanted, but the woman; he was an artist indeed, but he was beyond all a voluptuary.

Seven mornings she came to the garden in the warmth of the forenoon, and stood for him with the sacristan's wife and children looking on, and the monks who were sociable and not hermits, came now and then also under the colonnade, and talked of what was being done as became friars who had paintings of Gian Bellini and the Veronese on the walls of their church hard by; the gardener-monk who came thither with his spade and rake, and shears and water-pot was in especial eloquent.

"It would make an altar-piece, my son, and you might give it to us," he said, "only you have put such a profane look into it; it will not be a holy picture if you do not correct that; and myself I wonder why you paint new things at all; the chromo-lithographs in the shops under the Procuratie are so very fine; there is a reduction of the Assumption of our Titian there that I would sooner have myself than the original, for the colours are brighter and the size more sensible."

"Your government has had the Assumption daubed over until it is hardly better than a chromo-lithograph and you are verily wise as your generation is wise, my father," said Dorat angrily as the rotund figure of the monk, clothed in brown and with a hoe on his shoulder, came between him and the sunlight.

"I cannot paint here," he added impatiently to Veronica a little later, "I cannot paint here with these chattering fools; you must come to my studio to-morrow."

"Where is that?"

"On the Fondamento of the Malcanton. You know the house where the fig-tree hangs over the wall."

"But will it be well? Cattina said but yesterday to me: "'See I am here and the children and the holy men come and go, and so Tron will not mind much when he returns, but beware how you go to his house by yourself,' she meant your house."

"Do not heed Cattina or any one; and what of Tron? He cannot be here yet. He is gone to Greece, you say, and those heavy-laden brigs sail very slowly."

"But he will come back, sail they ever so slowly, and—"

"You are afraid of him?"

"I do not know," she did not know; the poor are too ignorant to sift, to analyse, to classify and to docket their emotions and sensations as cultured minds do theirs.

"Why did you marry him?" asked Dorat, with impatience and scorn.

"I do not know," she said again, his questions disturbed her as stones thrown into a well of still water trouble its clear surface.

"I will tell you," said Dorat, "you were a girl and girls are always curious, and vain, and inquisitive, and the first man who comes, is welcome: was it not so?"

"Perhaps," she said with a blush which came and went. "Zuan is handsome," she added with pride, "so strong and so tall, you would want to paint him also if you saw him."

"Ah," said Dorat with irritation, "it was his good looks and his straight limbs that tempted you then?"

"Perhaps," she answered again; but she answered uneasily; she was perplexed and troubled by this search into her motives and feelings. Zuan was handsome, but he was rude and violent; he swore at her in his wrath as he swore at the ropes and the sails when the waves were running high and the brig labouring through a white squall, along the coast of Dalmatia or Albania.

Dorat looked at her where she stood in the transparent light; her head and arms uncovered, her swelling bosom confined by the white linen bodice she wore, her whole aspect that of one of those strong

and fertile women with whom the quays and bridges and *calle* of Venice had been full in the days when Giorgione and Veronese and Titian had found their saints and goddesses in the maidens drying their golden locks seated high in air on their wooden *altane*, and sketched their Madonnas from the young matrons suckling their big-eyed infants in the noonday heat, under the vine-bower of a *Traghetto*.

"You must come to me in Malcanton," he said abruptly, "I cannot paint here, with all these people about, and in this glare of light. What should you fear? No one need know. If they do, it would not matter. No one will see your picture here. It will go with me to Paris."

"What is Paris?"

"The heaven of women and the smelting-house of genius. You do not understand? Of course you do not. That is what is so divine in you. You might be Eve or Lilith living in a virgin world."

He spoke dreamily, to himself rather than to her; and drew out the drawer of his colour-box in which the golden adder lay, and turned it over with his hand carelessly, as if seeking the colours which lay beside it.

Veronica's eyes fell on it; and her heart heaved under the linen of her gown.

"Come to my house," said Dorat softly, "come to-morrow to Malcanton."

She hesitated a moment and glanced towards the sacristan's wife who was washing carrots and peeling onions between two of the marble columns.

"I will come," she said in a low voice, "but do not let Cattina know."

"Cattina shall not know, any more than the adder that lies dead in the saxifrage."

Then he added a few touches, a little colour, to the portrait he had made of her, so that the monk and the woman might see him at work, and somewhat later let her go away from the garden by the narrow passages which turn and twist behind the church, passages full of teeming families, curly-haired children, fluttering rags, scarlet-runners clinging

to strings, little vines which flourish seemingly without soil, and here and there in the dirt and confusion and squalor, a brass vessel of beautiful shape, a marble lintel of beautiful moulding, an iron scroll-work balcony fit for Desdemona, or an ogive window with some broken fresco-colour on it under which Stradella may have played a serenade in the moonlight.

Dorat put the necklace once more in his pocket and went to his gondola.

"A daughter of the gods, a sister of the saints," he thought, "and yet won by a little gold, beaten out and curled about by a jeweller's cunning! They are all like that; all; the *cabotine* sleeps in every madonna of them all."

Veronica meanwhile who knew the multitudinous mazes of her city by heart, went on fast through the narrow ways and over the small bridges straight across the city until, behind the Grimani Palace, she reached the church of Santa Maria Formosa.

There she entered and crossed herself, and knelt for a few moments; then rose and asked one of the vergers where the famous picture was; being told she went to the first altar on the right hand and gazed at the Santa Barbara until her eyes grew blind.

"Like me! like me!" she thought; she knew nothing of pictures, less even than the monk who preferred the chromo-lithographs of the shops, but she could see that this saint was beautiful and he had said that she, a poor common woman, a sailor's wife, resembled her!

She sank down on her knees before the altar and tried to pray again, but could not; her heart beat too tumultuously, her brain was in too great a confusion of pride and of pleasure. She was like this great and heavenly creature! like this famous picture which strangers came from far and wide to see! Had it been painted from the saint herself? she asked of an old beggar who was near when she rose from her knees: the old man chuckled a little, decorously, as beseemed a reverent place.

"Not it; they do say it was painted from Violante, the painter's daughter, who was a love of Titian's; Titian was in luck; she must have been a rare one, and fine and strong too."



Veronica went out of the church with a dizzy sweetness dazing her; and took her way homeward by the lovely bridge of Paradise and under the *vista superba* of great Colleoni. When she reached the Campiello dei Merli it was late; her sister-in-law was scolding vigorously, the children were crying, the neighbours were quarrelling, the fish was burning in the frying-pan, the washed linen was lying in a heap on the kitchen floor unironed and unstarched. It all struck on her painfully with a sudden perception wholly new to her of its penury, its noise, its coarseness, its squalor, its misery.

She had never felt them so before. For to that which is for ever about us we are both blind and deaf until some ray of light from another world than ours is shed upon our darkness.

The calm green garden, the cool white cloisters, the sweet penetrating voice of Dorat, the homage and the eloquence of his eyes, all seemed to her very far away, far as a dream of the night.

"Have you sold the gold snake and brought us the money?" asked her sister-in-law.

"I gave it back to the gentleman a week ago," said Veronica in a low unsteady tone.

"More fool you," said the other woman.

The following day she did not go to the palace in Malcanton.

On the day after that, whilst it was still early in the forenoon, she was beating her linen in the canal water, leaning down from an old black boat of Zuan's; under the slender shade of an acacia tree, when the strokes of a gondola's oars came near to her. The gondola paused by her and she saw Dorat.

"Why are you unkind to me?" he murmured, with his hand on the side of her boat. She grew very red, and with her wet fingers hurriedly drew together the cotton folds of her bodice which had opened as she leaned over the side to dip her linen in the water; she felt that her hair was loose, her face and body were heated.

"Why are you so unkind to me?" he repeated, "without you I can do nothing with this portrait which might be so beautiful."

"There are many other women, and I am busy as you see."

"Leave those rags and come with me. There is no other woman in Venice who has the face of Santa Barbara and the form of Europa. Come."

"With you? Like this? Oh, no, oh, no!"

She spoke in infinite distress, her hands unconsciously wringing out the folds of one of Tron's rough blue shirts.

"Well, come by yourself if you will, but soon—I mean whilst the morning light holds. *Mia cara,* what use is it to have saved my life from the little snake, if you poison it to me yourself?"

"You laugh at me when you say such follies," said Veronica with a flush on her face half of anger half of humiliation, yet with a pleasure in her innermost soul which was stronger than either.

"No," said Dorat softly, "I speak in all seriousness. Your beauty haunts me. If you will not let me capture it at least in semblance on canvas, my days will be useless and your memory joyless to me. You know nothing of the world, but there are great cities in it where I can make men worship your effigy. You know nothing of books, but I think the public-reader in Chioggia still reads aloud Ariosto to the people sometimes, does he not? Ariosto, one saint's day, met a woman wearing a robe embroidered with golden branches of palm; and that palm-bearer changed the ways of his life for him; so you have changed mine."

The dulcet and poetic flattery, which was none the less sweet to her that she only most imperfectly comprehended it, sank into the very soul of Veronica as she listened, shrinking back from his gaze under the boughs of the mimosa acacia. At that moment the shrill voice of Tron's sister called to her from the Campo to come in and peel the onions.

"Do not let her see you," said Veronica in terror. "Go, go, pray go; she is a cruel woman and Zuan bade her watch me."

"Come then, where she cannot watch you!"

"I will come," murmured Veronica as she heard the heavy step of her sister-in-law sounding nearer and nearer over the stones."

"Have you not done yet, 'Nica," cried the woman, "a fine wife you make for a poor sailor. If Zuan hearken to me, he will bring you nought home but a rope's end. A few shirts to dip, and you are all the morning at it! Did my brother marry you to keep you like a duchess?"

"Come to me, and you shall have in recompense what you will," said Dorat, then he made a sign to his gondolier; and the man backed with a single sweep of his oar between some great black barges moored there, which screened him from the sight of the sister of Zuan Tron as she came down, breathless, blowzy, dishevelled, and bursting with invectives, to the edge of the stones where the acacia grew.

But Veronica did not go to him that day nor the next to that. Her resistance increased his desire and his resolution a hundredfold. He followed her, he interrupted her, he besieged her; what was it that he asked? So little! Only a few hours of morning light that he might make her beauty as famous to the world as it was dear to him. Whenever she went to pray in the churches near, which she did often, for Venetians are pious and humble children of the Church, he was there in the mellow incense-scented shadows, and his presence filled her whole existence; she could not sleep or work or eat for that one thought; she was a creature of simple mind, of clear conscience, of perfect honesty, but in her nature there was the capacity for strong passion, for romantic illusion, and to these he appealed irresistibly.

Zuan Tron's wooing had been brutality, not love; had she known it, Dorat's desires were no less brutal and were no more love. But they were veiled in the soft dreamy colours of art, of apparent deference, of sweet persuasive solicitation, and they seemed to her as the warm and soft south wind seemed, after the bitter blasts of the north from the mountains. The contest was unequal, as unequal as the contest of the lutist and the nightingale in Ford's great poem. The lutist had all the resources and endurance of art and of artifice; the nightingale had only its own little beating heart and throbbing throat.

The days passed and she did not yield; and the cloister garden saw neither her or Dorat.

"That great gentleman is always after you; if you brought home money, at least it might be worth while," said the sister of Tron, "if you brought home money, may be I would say nothing to Zuan when he comes back."

"You are a vile woman," said Veronica with all her face in a glow

of shame and rage; ignorant of how much the gold coins of Dorat had already to do with the relaxing of her sister-in-law's vigilance. But she was restless, feverish, ill at ease; she had strange dreams when she did sleep; and it was in vain that she besought the guidance of Santa Barbara.

Santa Barbara had been a princess and a warrior, her chastity decked in armour and the splendours of wealth around her, with her cannon and her tower in emblems of her strength. What could she know of the temptations assailing a poor sailor's wife?

"You are cruel to me," said Dorat, and repeated it so often that the ignorance of her mind and the tenderness of her nature blent together in a sense of tormenting reproach: she believed that he suffered; his palor, his restlessness, his heavy eyes, his feverish movements seemed to her like the suffering of the soul, and all that he told her she believed. Indeed for the moment he was sincere; in their desires men lie like truth because they do not know that they are lying; what they wish for is to them, as to children, the universe for that one moment, and they are honest when they vow it is so.

"Will you come once more at least to the cloister? if you will not come to my house," he asked, "what can you fear? Zuan Tron himself might see you in the garden, what could he say? We are hardly ever alone. It is a sacred place."

"I will come once more there, then," said Veronica reluctantly; and yet with her whole being in a tumult of longing fear and joy. It could not be very wrong or perilous, she thought; the children ran in and out, the sacristan's wife always near, usually some monk paced through the aisles. There could be no risk or harm in going there, she thought.

It was a brilliant morning when she reached San Francisco on the morrow. Rain had fallen in the night and washed all things fresh and fair. The herbs in the garden filled the air with pungent sweetness. Some lizards swayed themselves on the blossoms of the rose laurels. Some pigeons scratched amongst the thyme and basil.

"I thank you for this at least," said Dorat gravely and with deference; the portrait of her, in its shadowy unfinished suggestion, stood on an

immense easel within one of the arcades. He placed her in the attitude of the Santa Barbara and, himself almost turning his back on her and only looking at her furtively from time to time, painted on steadily without heeding the woman Cattina who came and looked on till she was tired, or the gardener-monk who was digging in one of the borders, or the sacristan who said that the picture would be a better one if Veronica borrowed his wife's best feast day gown, a fine blue gown with red and yellow ribands attached to it.

Dorat answered them no single word, and they talked till they were tired, and went away unnoticed and displeased. It was noon when he had worked two hours; the drowsy heat lay like a weight upon the eyelids; the green leaves lost their verdure and drooped, the monks went in to the monastery, the shutters were shut in the sacristan's windows and the church itself was closed : entire silence reigned everywhere.

Dorat turned, and laid down his palette and his brushes and looked at her : she coloured over all her face and throat under that gaze which seemed like a very flame of fire stealing into all the recesses of her soul. She had stood still like a thing carved in marble for two whole hours; a sense of oppression, of faintness, of dizziness came over her, strong though she was in her sea-fed vigour and youth.

"I am tired and thirsty," she murmured, "may I go?"

Dorat did not answer; but he came towards her till he was so close that his lips brushed her hair, and with a touch soft and swift as the touch of the living adder had been, his hands stole round her throat, and clasped the golden adder around it. Then, unresisting, she sank into his arms.

"Santa Barbara s'est donnée à moi," he thought a month later, "et que puis-je en faire, mon Dieu?"

The warmth of the summer was passed; the rains had come, and oftentimes the white fogs drifted in from the Adriatic and shrouded the sculptures of the Salute, and the golden domes of St. Mark's, as in a vapour of snow; the noons were still hot and the waters still were beautiful with fruit boats and barges piled high with grapes, coming in from all the isles and filling the city with their regal purple and gold.

And in the studio on the canal of the Malcanton a great picture was finished, in which his fullest genius and mastery of colour had found expression; the portrait of a woman with the head of Santa Barbara and the body of Europa. Painted with singular rapidity and strength it had the vitality of a sudden passion in it; it lived, it breathed, it spoke; it was the incarnation of Woman.

But he had given a high price for it. He had created a passion in another over which he had no control, one of those intense, unreasoning, absolute passions which can only exist in natures which are all sense and emotion, over which the mind has no dominion and in which all reason is dumb.

He had destroyed in her the calm of ignorance, and the simplicity of unconscious chastity; and there had arisen in their stead one of those violent, delirious, exhausting tempests of love which is ecstasy to a lover for a little time, and then appals, enthralls, wearies, and burdens him, and clings to him, fatal as the shirt of Nessus.

She was a beautiful woman, yes; but when her beauty had been made wholly his, and studied, devoured, and known in every line both by his art, and by his senses, her mind could say nothing to his, and he asked himself with a sigh what should he do with this adoration which he had called into being?

He had no love for her; and the violence, the immensity, the absorption of the love she felt for him terrified him. He had desired a summer week's caprice, a conquest for his art and for his senses : and she dreamed of an eternity of union! All the ardours dormant in her had awakened into life, and clung to him with a force which was commensurate with the physical strength and the splendid vitality in her. Sometimes he felt as if the adder she had killed had taken resurrection in her, and clasped him and curled round him and drew away his very life-blood till he swooned.

He had forgotten the sheer animalism of the untutored human creature and the intense avarice, and jealousy, and greed of love in a woman whose intelligence is a blank. And he was himself unreasonable. He had had no rest until he had banished her modesty, her serenity, her



peaceful ignorance of passion, and yet, he was dissatisfied now because she was no longer the same woman who had looked at him with those tranquil eyes of Palma Vecchio's saint.

The chill of the autumn come in the air, the mists of the autumn made the sails limp and wet, the lagoons drear and rough, the golden altars of the churches dim and dull; and Venice held him no more in her sovereign charm; he grew restless for movement and change and the cities and companionship of men.

"All of her that I care to keep is here," he thought as he looked at the picture, "and what can I do with the living woman?"

And he felt unkind, ungrateful, almost base; yet the poet is right:

> Is it under our control
> To love or not to love!

If he took her away with him he knew well what the issue would be; the old, old story; the terrible idolatry on one side growing ever stronger on neglect and coldness, the indifference on the other which would become, under exaction and reproach, impatience, intolerance, and even at the last hatred, the cruelest hatred of all, that which spurns what it once fondly sought.

He knew this inevitable end so well, and he was sorry, for in so far as he could feel it, being of the temperament he was, he had a compassion which was almost affection for this woman who had saved his life whilst he slept in the cloister garden, and who had seemed to him on his awaking, half a goddess, half a saint, and whom he knew now to be but a poor daughter and wife of rude men, a poor child of ignorance and toil, with whom his mind and his thoughts had no affinity, however closely their hearts might beat together. And how to tell her this? he who had made himself her earth and heaven? whose own paradise indeed she had even been for a few short summer weeks, in the sweet languor of the Venetian air?

She had saved his flesh from the sting of the adder, and he had placed in hers the dying sting of a deathless desire.

It was harsh, ungenerous, ungrateful, but he knew that he must leave her, that he would leave her, as soon as the first north winds of November

should blow the sea spray over the stairs of the Ducal Palace and wash the rosy feet of the pattering pigeons in its courts.

The thought of Zuan Tron was unpleasant to him, but not intolerable as it would have been earlier in the year. He did not feel for her that love which creates jealousy, either of the past or of the future.

What he most feared of all was that she should quarrel with her husband, and lean wholly on himself. But how could he say that to her when she came to him up the marble water-steps of his house in the moonlight with such surety and ecstasy of love in her eyes?

"My poor Veronica, it would have been well for you if you had left the adder do its work on me that day," he murmured once to her. But she would not understand. She smiled and sighed, that sigh which means that joy is beyond words. How could she tell that this adoration, this ardour, these embraces were not love?—were merely the play of a grown child to whom no plaything could long suffice. Zuan Tron might kill her when he came home : that she knew; and sometimes the terror of his vengeance ran like ice through the leaping warmth of her veins. But she put that thought from her. She was not twenty years old and she was happy. To other eyes she was only Veronica Venier the wife of Tron; but to herself, because to her lover, she was a goddess, a queen of heaven, even as the Barbara was in her immortality, even as the Europa was with her white breasts and shining hair. She had drunk deep of the philtre of vanity and passion; and when she trod the stones of court and alley she walked as one whose winged feet tread on air. Was she not more than mortal? Had he not found her fair?

"Thou art a fool, thou art a fool! But I have made solid money out of thee, and though the gallant will go with the summer, these pieces will stay behind him," thought her sister-in-law counting over the bright gold and the crisp notes which she had had from Dorat, and which she had laid up with her feast day clothes with sprigs of Easter-blessed olive to keep the thieves away. Zuan would be none the wiser when he came home that thieves had been at his treasure; sailors went and came and were long away, and must take their chance of what was done in their absence.

"He will be back at Ognissanti," said Veronica once, and her eyes had

a look of appeal and of terror in them as they gazed into Dorat's. He looked away from them.

"Ognissanti is not here yet," he answered, "and ships do not always reach the port for which they are bound."

"She is a good brig, and they know every knot of their course as I know the turns of the *calle,*" she said with a shudder which passed over her fine smooth skin like a cold breeze that blows over sun-warmed waters.

"We will show him your portrait when he comes," said Dorat and smiled; the Othellos of life had no terrors for him, this one would no doubt take gold as his sister had taken it.

"He is only a working sailor is he?" he added, "well, we will buy him a brig of his own; then he will be owner and skipper in one, and he will be always away on the seas, and you will be at peace."

"No," said Veronica abruptly, "you shall not do that."

The coarseness of the cultured mind stung and wounded the instinctive honour of the untaught nature. Then with passionate tenderness and entreaty she threw her white arms, the arms of the Europa, about his throat.

"Take me away before he comes," she murmured, "take me to your own country, your own city, anywhere, anywhere, before he comes."

"Are you so afraid of the brute?" he asked evading her prayer.

Veronica was silent, her face hidden on his breast.

Then she said slowly: "I am afraid, yes; for as the Madonna lives in heaven, so surely, if he try to touch me *now,* will I strike him dead, stone dead."

Dorat started and looked down on her, troubled as he was always troubled by the violence and intensity of her feeling for him. Then he smiled and caressed her.

"Oh, my angel, neither he nor I are worth that. We are in the city of Desdemona and of Stradella indeed, but those great passions are not of our day nor of my world. Leave me to deal with your husband. He shall not trouble us."

He felt a coward and treacherous as he spoke. He knew that this was not the recompense she merited, nor the devotion that he had promised; he was conscious that in contrast with the greatness and

veracity of her love for him, this egotism must seem feeble, ungenerous, pitiful, coarse. But he could not force himself to say otherwise. He dreaded with the intensity of long selfishness the burden of her constancy, the tumult of jealousy, of reproach, of violence which would come with the arrival of her husband if the truth were made manifest.

He had no physical fear, for he was a brave man physically, but he dreaded unspeakably the ridicule of the world, the harassing emotions of untutored and uncontrolled temperaments, and he intended to go away where these could not trouble or pursue him. She would be wretched for a while; women were always so; but with a season that would pass away, and she would learn wisdom and resignation to the inevitable; and he would come to her again some time in spring or summer; he had a certain affection for her and she had been his Santa Barbara, his Europa. She would always merit some remembrance. That he admitted to himself.

Veronica said nothing more that day, but on the sensuous beauty of her mouth and in the lustre of her eyes there came a look which left him uneasy; the look that he would have given on canvas to a Clytemnestra or a Medea.

"Oh! furious Moor, have you left your sombre spirit breathing on these waters?" he thought as he passed Othello's house in going to the Zattere. It was a spirit not in unison with his own. Like all men who love pleasure, he shunned and dreaded passion.

It was now October. The days were short but luminous still when the mists did not drift in from the lagoons of the Lido, or from the marshes of the low-lying lands beyond Mestre and Fucina. Boats still came in with rosy sunrise reflections shed on their orange sails, and took their loads of autumn apples and pears and walnuts to the fruit market above Rialto. But soon, very soon, it would be winter, and the gondolas would glide by with closed *felze,* and the water would be a troubled waste between the city and the Lido, and men would hurry with muffled heads over the square of Saint Mark when the alpine wind blew, and the strange big ships would creep on their piloted course tediously and timidly through the snow storms to their anchorage in the wide Giudecca.

And Dorat would be away. How to tell her that he was going? How to plant that knife in her generous breast? How to banish from those adoring eyes that sleep which he still cared to watch? He was not heartless, and the knowledge of how cruelly he would hurt her hurt himself; nor could he wholly forget that in the cloister garden, this woman, whom he knew he would desert, had saved his life.

The days passed, each a little shorter, a little colder, than its predecessor; and the sea-gulls and curlews finding food rare on the northern waters, came in thousands nearer the city.

One morning Veronica went from his palace in the Malcanton to go as was her wont to mass at San Vitale, for it was a holy day and the bells were chiming from the spires and domes, and the coloured banners were hanging above the church doors, and the sound of sonorous symphonies and chaunting choristers echoed over the canals.

Dorat lay still on his bed, and gazed at her portrait. It was a great picture; a picture which would make all men envy him. Where it stood in the distance, in the studio on to which his chamber opened, the brilliancy of the morning light illumined it; it looked as she had looked when he had seen her first in the cloister garden. Barely ten weeks had gone by since then, but she no longer looked to him like that. Yet she had true beauty in her face and form, and she loved him—great heavens! how she loved him!

"Voilà le mal!" he thought sadly with the cruel wisdom of one who has been too often and too much loved, the sorrowful satiety of experience.

All was silent around him. There is but little traffic that passes through the Malcanton. The tolling of all the distant bells had ceased; high mass was being said in all the churches. He stretched his limbs out as he had done on the marble ledge of the cloister colonnade, he slept again, profoundly.

An hour had gone by when he was awakened by the voice of Veronica. In terrible agitation she cried aloud, to him as she hung over his pillow.

"Wake, oh, wake! his brig has been sighted off the Tre Porte; a sailor has told me so this morning. By evening he will be here; in the city, do

you understand? They have seen his brig coming in by the Tre Porte!"

Dorat, astonished, and scarcely awake, gazed at her where she knelt beside his couch, flung down beside it in a vehemence of emotion which shook her from head to foot.

"Do you mean your husband's ship?" he asked her, still drowsy and bewildered.

"Whose else? Take me away, take me away! He shall not touch me, he shall not look on me! Do you understand? He will be in port, here, by evening."

"Yes, I hear what you say."

Dorat raised himself on one arm and looked upon her with pain and trouble. He understood her, but how could he bring her to comprehend him?

"Why do you have such fear of this man? It is needless," he said persuasively. "He need never know, he will never know, if you have common prudence; and I will be always his best friend and yours, my dear child. Tron may be a brute, but brutes are tamed; the human brute is always tame when he smells gold; and you know that I am rich. I will spare nothing to make your life easier and happier; all things can be managed by money."

He paused, startled by the expression in her eyes; her hands were clenched on the satin coverlet of the bed.

"You must take me away," she muttered, "you must take me away far away, very far, before the brig comes in at *Ave Maria*."

"I cannot do that."

"Cannot—why?"

He was silent; embarrassed, troubled, not knowing how to reason with the unreason of passion.

"Why cannot you? You love me," she said with a vibration of ferocity and suspicion in her tone.

"I love you certainly," he answered with a passing sigh for the falsehood which would have been, in some sense, a truth only a few weeks earlier. "But I cannot take you where I go. You would be wretched, and I too. I should have told you this before, but I thought you understood that—that—in a word it is impossible. I will come and see you

here, next summer. We will be as happy as we have been. But you must be reasonable, dear. Tron will never know. You must meet him as you have met him before. Do you not understand? It will be painful to you, but women can always act if they choose. We will show him this picture, and you will tell him you have sat for it, and then he will not wonder that we are friends, and I will buy him the best vessel that is building in the yards. Veronica do not look like that,—we will be together next year as we have been now. Only be prudent. I abhor tragedy, and all scenes that are painful."

She rose slowly from her knees, and stood erect beside the bed and gazed down on him; it seemed to him as if her eyes blazed fire and the fire entered into his very soul, and searched out, and searched up, all its littleness and poverty.

"You would have me live with him, whilst I love you?" she said slowly, while her white teeth closed on the red fulness of her lower lip.

A faint flush of shame passed over his face; the tone of the words cut him like a scourge.

"I shall not be here," he murmured, "and you must be prudent till we meet again; you are a noble creature, and very dear to me, but you do not understand."

"I understand."

An immense scorn flashed over all the beauty of her face, and quivered in her tremulous nostrils, her breathless mouth, her agonised eyes. Without a word she left him. At last she understood but too well; all the coldness, and ingratitude, and cruelty which lie in mere desire were laid bare to her. Her hands clutched the golden adder which was always. sleeping and waking, round her throat, but she could not unclasp it.

"He never loved me; he never loved me," she muttered as she went through the lofty rooms down the staircase and out on to the marble water-steps.

The full light of day smote her on her eyes as with a blow.

He had never loved her, but she had been his; no other should touch what he had embraced. There was no escape for her possible but in death: by death alone could she keep inviolate what had been given to him.

Her husband would be in the city at night-fall. She would have killed him if her lover had cared, but he did not care, and her own life was hateful to her.

The place of Malcanton was quite silent and empty; there was not even a bird in the leafless branches of the fig-tree to behold her.

"He never loved me!" she said once more between her shut teeth "but I am his—I am as dross in his eyes to be passed on to another; —but I am his; Zuan shall never touch me."

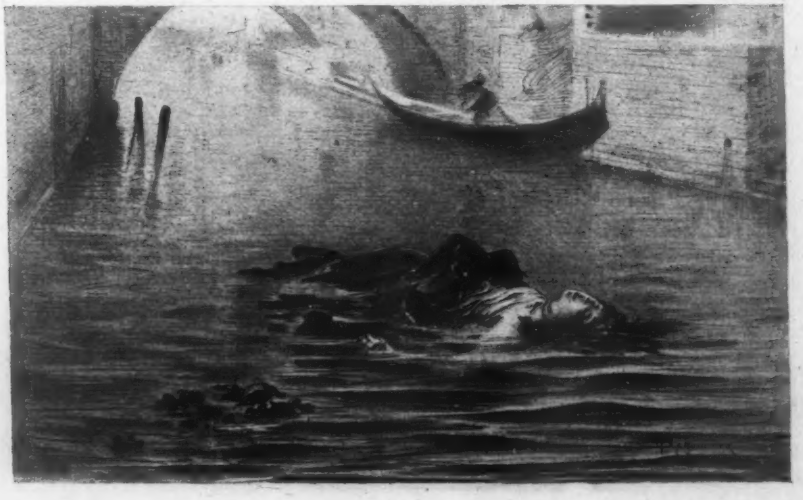
So, knowing well what she did, she descended to the lowest of the water-steps and thence stepped calmly from the lowest stair into the cold, yellow, sluggish water itself, and threw herself forward, face downward upon its slimy breast.

It was only a few feet deep, but deep enough to drown.

The mud soon choked her; the thick gliding current soon stole over her and sucked beneath it her shining hair, her white bosom, her beautiful limbs.

And when the brig came into port at evening she was lying dead on Dorat's bed, with the green weeds of the canal caught in her clenched hands, and the little golden adder clasped about her throat.

OUIDA.





OLD AND NEW ORDNANCE

The earliest pieces of artillery formed to throw balls by means of the explosive force of gunpowder, which is a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal, differed greatly in their names, shapes, and sizes, though being rather small for the most part.

These pieces or cannon, generally consisted of a barrel of which the inner space constituted the chamber, the barrel being open at the one end or mouth, the other being variously shaped. In some of these pieces the hinder part, called the breech, was entirely closed; in others the barrel was open at both ends, whilst in some the breech consisted of a kind of moveable cover capable of being attached to the rear of the barrel. In the first of these arrangements the charge of powder and the ball were rammed into the chamber through the muzzle; in the second they were inserted at the breech, which was then closed in several ways, all of them being more or less rude; in the third the charge was placed in a moveable chamber which was afterwards affixed to the cannon by

bolts or plugs; moreover spare chambers were sometimes provided to take the place of the one which had been emptied after firing. In most cases the receptacle for the charge was called the chamber, however it might be arranged. Thus the two modes of charging, by the muzzle and the breech, were understood at the outset.

The barrel of the cannon sometimes consisted of a row of metallic rings which were welded or secured together in succession, and frequently of iron bars arranged like the staves of a cask and hooped together. A



passage, called the touch-hole or vent, was bored in the thick part of the metal and was filled with the priming powder, the charge being fired by means of a red-hot iron rod or a linstock.

The earliest methods of manufacture could not be other than imperfect, as they were carried on by private industry. The manœuvering and firing of the first cannon took a long time. In 1437, a Metz artilleryman named Commouffle, was accused of magic because he could "fire off his piece in any direction he pleased thrice in the day," and he was sent to Rome to be purged of his sins. The Hotchkiss repeating gun now employed in the navy can be fired from twelve to fifteen times a minute, or eight thousand six hundred and forty times in twelve hours.

Moreover, accidents were common. James the Second of Scotland was killed in 1460 by the bursting of a small cannon. His death is recorded in history because he was a king; yet how many obscure martyrs of the artillerist's art are there of whom nothing is said! Still the employment was accounted very perilous : it is said in an old manu-


TROYA
HECTOR

script treatise on the *Art of Gunnery* that "the force and power of the powder sometimes causes the piece to explode in which it is fired and even when it does not explode, there is always a risk of being burnt by the powder." Hence the first recommendation to an artilleryman is to "honour, fear, and love God and to stand always in greater dread of offending Him, than of any soldier." The second is to "apply a good match to the priming and to step sixteen paces backward and on one side."

In this respect, time has not improved the old state of things as it has the rapidity of fire and the extent of the range. Though not common, yet the serious accidents which occur now and then impress the public



and attract the notice of professional men. Such was the case when a Krupp gun burst on board a Russian frigate, twelve men being killed or wounded. On the 12th of January, 1879, an officer and eight out of nine men in the forward turret of the *Thunderer* were killed, owing to the bursting there of a thirty-eight ton gun, the ninth man was very dangerously injured, whilst a lieutenant and one man were killed, and thirty-five men more or less seriously wounded outside the turret. We could cite several other cases.

Be that as it may the system of breech-loading was given up after the fifteenth century. Wrought iron guns were supplanted by those cast in iron or brass, and owing to the advances in the art of founding, at the same time, brass or cast iron balls took the place of the stone balls which had succeeded the bolts of the cross-bows, leaden balls, etc. Emulation between workmen combined with rivalries between cities and

sovereigns caused the several pieces of ordnance to be increased in size to an absurd extent, these being bombards, culverins and cannon. The huge bombard which was employed in 1452, at the siege of Oudenard by the inhabitants of Ghent, and which is still extant, had an internal diameter that is calibre of 0^m64 and a total length of 5^m025; it weighed 16,400 kilogrammes, and it is said to have thrown a stone ball weighing 340 kilogrammes. Judging from the size of the chamber the charge of powder would have been over 40 kilogrammes. In our day there has been a recurrence to these huge sizes. The weight of a cast-iron gun having a calibre of 0^m27 and an inner tube and outer hoops of steel, is 23,200 kilogrammes, its extreme length being 5^m380; the chilled iron shell which is used against armour plating, weighs 220 kilogrammes; the charge of powder amounts to 42 kilogrammes. It must be noted, however, that such a gun is intended for the navy, or for arming shore batteries, and if there be still more powerful navy guns, such as one weighing 76,000 kilogrammes, and throwing a projectile of 900 kilogrammes, the siege artillery does not include a steel gun of greater calibre than 0^m155, whereof the weight is 2,530 kilogrammes, and the shell weighs 40 kilogrammes. The bombard of Ghent may be regarded as a siege gun.

The greatest difficulty in employing such heavy pieces as those of which the calibre is 0^m27 consists in moving them from place to place. At the siege of Constantinople, in 1453, a Turkish bombard which was drawn by fifty pairs of oxen, took two months to get over a distance equal to two days' march. Five years ago we actually saw at the mouth of the Gironde a gun of the calibre of 0^m27, which was placed upon a waggon weighing 8,300 kilogrammes, including the gun, being equal to 31,500 kilogrammes in all, the whole being drawn by a long file of oxen in pairs, take several days at the same slow pace to traverse a sandy beach of two kilometres in extent. Nowadays, with the narrow gauge railways which can be quickly laid down, and with the trucks and locomotives fitted for running upon them, it is a simple matter to transport artillery, and easy to employ guns of the largest size in siege batteries. Thanks, then, to industrial progress the ideas which had to be abandoned as impracticable can now be carried into effect.

We shall not follow the successive changes in pieces of ordnance. We will merely observe that every new form of artillery has been the outcome of a series of great wars. It was at the close of the Hundred Years' War and in the reign of Louis XI, that the brothers Jean and Gaspard Bureau prepared the formidable field train wherewith Charles VIII startled and conquered Italy. It was after the struggles of Francis I and Henry II against Charles V and the generals of Philip II, that Jean d'Estrées caused the fine pieces of brass ordnance to be cast which Brantôme admired. Scarcely had the wars of religion ended than Sully introduced that admirable order into the arsenals which has not ceased to prevail since then. During this long period the artillery was rendered lighter, the gun-carriages were improved, the trunnions were invented.

The first pieces of ordnance carried on waggons were placed upon special supports when fired off, these supports receiving the name of gun-carriages and being afterwards supplied with wheels so as to suffice both when the pieces were fired and when they were drawn from place to place. By degrees and successive steps these carriages were furnished with two elongated cheeks, placed nearly parallel on each side of the piece, in each of which, at the front and upper part, a semi-circular groove was formed; the piece being kept in these grooves by means of trunnions upon which it turns when pointed by elevating or lowering the breech. This arrangement dates from the wars of Charles VIII.

In Louis the Fourteenth's reign, the artillery did not undergo many modifications although the art of casting then attained its final development. One may judge of this from the fine cannon which are the ornaments of our museums at the present day, and which were supplied from the same workshop as the statues in the Park at Versailles, yet these cannon were heavy and cumbrous, and no distinction was drawn between those which were destined for field operations, and those which were to be used in sieges or placed on the ramparts of a fortress.

The first regular system of artillery, for which we are indebted to Valière, and which was formed in 1732, was planned by him with more regard to the power of the guns and the solidity of their carriages, than


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to their capacity for rapid movement. His gun-carriages which were mounted on limbers with low shafts were horsed in the French fashion, that is with the horses in tandem. His guns weighed two hundred and fifty times as much as the ball, and the charge was equivalent to the half of the weight of the ball. Thus the gun which threw a ball weighing eight pounds, weighed two thousand pounds, the charge amounting to four pounds.

As artillery of this sort could not be utilized at army manœuvres, the plan was adopted at the instance of the Marshal de Saxe, and in accordance with what Gustavus Adolphus had performed, of having field pieces of small calibre, on light carriages, drawn by three horses, which were attached to regiments of infantry and supported by them, these pieces being styled battalion guns in contradistinction to heavy artillery of a brigade or a park. The Prussian and Austrian armies were armed in the like manner, but in them as in the French army the light field pieces lacked power, and the heavy ones were wanting in mobility. Experience gained during the Seven Years' War demonstrated this. During that war the artillery was generally used on the defensive. At Kollin the successive echelons of the Prussian line could not be followed by their artillery and they were crushed in detail by the Austrian artillery before meeting the enemy. General Wedel, who wished to out-flank the Russian army at Kay, turned into some cross-roads where his heavy guns were embedded in mud; directing a fire with his field pieces against the enemy which was supported by batteries of heavy artillery, he suffered a sanguinary defeat. Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, who was accustomed to overcome French generals, was beaten at Bergen by the Duke de Broglie, because he began the attack without waiting for his heavy guns which were slow in arriving. In short, no Power was supplied with adequate field artillery, and once peace was signed, each felt that it was necessary to provide itself with guns of the kind.

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The honour of achieving this result in France belongs wholly to Gribeau-

val, whose name ought to rank with the most illustrious for the service which he rendered to his country in assuring to it beforehand the superiority in artillery during the struggle with the other coalesced European powers. Rejected before the Seven Years' War, and almost persecuted, received with marked favour by the public voice when, after the peace, he left the Austrian service in which he was named Lieutenant-General in command of the artillery and had distinguished himself by the defence of Schweidnitz against Frederick II, Gribeauval had seen his system enjoy that favour abroad which is the best warranty in France for the success of an invention. Accepted for the first time in 1765, dropped for a time owing to a reactionary movement, this system was definitely adopted in 1777. Gribeauval was finally appointed Inspector-General of artillery, having being invested with the authority to give effect to his reforms without further opposition.

The dominant idea in Gribeauval's system is the entire separation between the material of artillery for use in the field and that for siege purposes, in a fortress or on the coast. Powerfulness of effect ought to characterize the latter. Mobility must be one of the qualities of field artillery because, being directed against troops, its power need not be so great.

In order to explain the work due to Gribeauval we must give some technical details which are also indispensable for understanding the subsequent reforms. The weight of a cannon obviously depends upon the length and thickness of the barrel. Now, the greater the force and speed imparted to a projectile, the more necessary is it to increase the amount of the charge, provided the same kind of powder be employed, and the larger the charge, the longer is the time required for its ignition, and the longer must be the chamber of the piece in order that the charge may have time to ignite before the expulsion of the projectile (otherwise a portion of the charge would be wasted); on the other hand, the heavier the charge, the more powerful is its action against the sides of the barrel and the thicker must they be to resist it. Should one determine, then, to sacrifice a portion of the speed of the projectile, one may decrease the amount of the charge and consequently diminish the

length of the chamber as well as the thickness of the barrel, and thus one can lessen the weight of the piece. Moreover, the more the calibre of the piece is enlarged, and the heavier the projectile, the result is that the charge must be increased as well as the length and the weight of the piece. Hence it has long been customary to designate the length of the chamber of a piece in proportion to the calibre, and its weight in multiples of the weight of the ball. So it is said of a cannon on Valière's system to have twenty-five calibres in the length of the chamber and to weigh two hundred and fifty times the weight of the ball.

Hitherto we have supposed the powder to be always of the same kind; but powder burns quicker or slower, in a word is sharp or slow according to the way in which it is made. It is obvious from what has been said that the slower the powder, the longer must be the chamber and the sharper it is the greater must be the resisting power, and consequently the thickness of the barrel. In the early periods of artillery, the powder, being very badly made, ignited very slowly; hence the guns had to be long, and some of them, such as the culverins, designed for rapid firing, took proportionately large charges and were of an excessive length. For example the famous culverin of Genoa, having a calibre of $0^{m}16$ 1/2, was more than 10 metres long, whilst the longest cannon of the present day, one of $0^{m}16$, is not more than $3^{m}250$. At a later period, the pieces of ordnance were shortened, owing to the powder having become sharper as the result of an improvement in its manufacture. In our day there has been a return to slow-burning powder, because steel being employed, and the mechanism of the breech being delicate it was necessary that the piece should not be exposed to sudden shocks, and the consequence has been that the pieces are lengthened again. Thus a field piece of $0^{m}080$ on Bange's system has a chamber of which the length is about twenty-six calibres, whilst rifled four-pounders, on the system of Treuille de Beaulieu, had a length of sixteen calibres only. But let us return to Gribeauval.

He admits three calibres for field artillery; twelve-pounders, eight-pounders and four-pounders, that is to say, guns throwing balls of twelve, eight or four pounds in weight. He reduced the charges to a third of

the weight of the ball, the length of the chamber to sixteen calibres, the weight of the piece to a hundred and fifty times that of the ball. His gun-carriages, which are much lighter than Valière's, carried an ammunition chest between their cheeks (a precious stand-by when the piece is separated from its tumbril) and they rested on limbers with high wheels which helped their motion but limited their turning power and remained continually fastened to the hinder carriage in a vertical direction; the pole being substituted for shafts, and the German fashion of horsing being substituted for the French, the horses being harnessed to a splinter-bar. The process of removing and replacing the limber being long and difficult, Gribeauval dispensed with it in the field, substituting the clever invention of the binding-rope, that being the name of a long and strong cordage wherewith the piece and its limber are connected and which lies loosely on the ground during firing. Should it be desired to move the piece, the limber is brought a few paces forward, the binding-rope then stretches out and the piece moves after the limber. The tumbril following the piece, consists of an elongated box, which is closed by a pent-shaped cover and rests on two limbers, the fore one ressembling that of the limber of the piece. Whilst in Valière's system the guns were accompanied by hand-carts, carrying the balls in loose order and the powder in barrels, Gribeauval's tumbrils carried behind the pieces a considerable supply of prepared ammunition, such as cartridges, which ensured rapidity in loading.

Valière merely determined the sizes and the forms of his guns. By means of his tables of construction, Gribeauval imported such a precision into all the details of artillery material, that a gun-carriage or a tumbril constructed, for instance, in the arsenal at Bourges is identical in the most minute particulars with a gun-carriage or a tumbril of the same class which leaves the arsenal of Bayonne or Toulon, and the same duplicates can serve for the speedy repair of all the gun-carriages. The character of interchangeability which has been extended at the present day to portable weapons, is of the highest importance as regards the use of material of war, and one need not hesitate to affirm that it alone rendered possible the far-distant marches of Napoleon's armies.

One of the most important among the improvements due to Gribeauval, is the method of pointing. Till his time one trusted to observing the shots to find how to mount the ordnance, and the most noted artillerymen limited the range of effective fire to two hundred metres. Gribeauval employed a screw for pointing purposes upon which the breech rested, and which could be raised and lowered when desired by turning a handle in accordance with the indications of the tangent-scale, a moveable slide fitting into a groove behind the breech which can be elevated and depressed in proportion to the distance from the mark; thus in order to take aim it is enough to lower or raise the breech in such a way as to bring into line the tangent-scale, a sight placed at the muzzle (this refers to Gribeauval's guns), and the mark.

The principal advantages of Gribeauval's system may be summed up as consisting in the mobility due to the height of the wheels on the limber, the manner of horsing, and above all, to the use of the binding-rope, the supply of ammunition, prepared beforehand, which followed the pieces, the rapidity of fire due to ball cartridge, facility in pointing, perfect uniformity in the several parts of the duplicates. These advantages gave the French artillery a superiority over any other, a superiority which was admitted by our enemies from the outset of the Revolutionary campaigns, to which much of the salvation of the Republic and the glory of the First Empire were due.

The character of Gribeauval's system of artillery was augmented by the addition of horse, or light artillery, which dates from 1791, as well as by the institution of trains of artillery, a creation of the Consulate. Soldiers who were governed by military laws and the code of honour took the place of the civilian waggoners of the old artillery.

To recount all the daring feats for which the horse artillery were distinguished during the glorious wars from 1792 to 1815, would be to set forth all the combats and battles of that great epoch from Valmy, where two batteries of horse artillery speeding at a gallop over the plateau of the Moulin, restored the confidence of the young volunteers which had been shaken for a moment by the fall of Kellermann and the wound of Aboville, down to Waterloo where Colonel Duchand, rushing amidst

the English battalions in order to cannonade them at close quarters, drew forth the famous exclamation from the Emperor : "Duchand is deserting!" And more than once after the creation of the artillery train, the foot artillery rivalled the horse; at Friedland both of them being led by Senarmont, dashing with the like fury to meet the Russian infantry, crushed it. The historian of Wagram draws no distinction between the thirty-six pieces of foot artillery, and the twenty-four pieces of horse artillery of the guards which were deployed at a gallop by Lauriston, to prepare the way for the triumphal march of Macdonald's column.

Yet Gribeauval's system of artillery was far from being perfect : manœuvering with the cordage was not easy where the ground was rough, the gun-carriages being jolted in a dangerous way; the tumbrils could not always follow the pieces and the rapid movements of foot artillery were necessarily few and short. Every officer admitted these drawbacks, those especially who had been in the Spanish campaign, and who were acquainted with the new English artillery, and its mobility. One of the earliest appearances of the latter in the battle-field had attracted attention : a cavalry general who was noteworthy for his resolution and for taking in anything at a glance, perceived a battery which he thought was in a critical position, and he went off to capture it at the head of some picked squadrons. These valiant horsemen, thinking themselves already masters of it, set up shouts of triumph, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the artillery men limbered up, sprang upon the ammunition chests, and disappeared at a gallop.

Besides, the veterans of the army of the Rhine remembered the company called Wurtz, a battery of light artillery, taking this name from that of the tumbrils which had a peculiar shape, and on which some of the gunners sat astride, whilst the others rode on the off-horses; this company under the command of Captain Dorssner, covered itself with glory at the blockade of Mayence in 1795.

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The remembrance of these things caused the reorganisation in the

material and the *personnel* of the artillery to be taken into consideration in the first years of the Restoration, and the generals who had commanded artillery in the field, drew up the scheme for the material, dating from 1827, and for the *personnel* from 1829.

The special qualities of the new material consisted in the almost entire independence of the two trains, in the facility of turning, in the simplicity of the movement for detaching and attaching the limber, and in carrying the gunners on the ammunition chest. The limbers of the piece and of the tumbril which were identical, had each a flat cover; the rear limber of the tumbril had two, thus there was room to seat nine gunners; the seat on the gun-carriage was done away with and the pair of elongated cheeks of Gribeauval's gun-carriage, were replaced by two short ones encircling a central perch which ended the stock, joined to the limber by an arched piece permitting the entry of the pole-pin placed behind the axle-tree. This method of joining the two trains and their independence vertically caused the weight of the pole to be borne by the rear horses, and led to the suppression of the splinter-bar at the end of the pole, by adopting the English plan of horsing, traces following traces.

The stoppage in 1829 of the organisation of the *personnel* was the result and the complement of the improvements in the material. The men who drew the guns were put on the footing of those who served them, all became gunners, the ones being styled leading gunners, the others gunners on horseback or on foot. United under the command of a captain, they constituted a horse or a mounted battery according as to whether the gunners were carried on horseback or on tumbrils.

No other change was made in Gribeauval's system of ordnance, save the abolition of the four-pounder as being too ineffective (it was replaced for a time under the Empire by a six-pounder which was abandoned in 1814), and these two sizes only were maintained, eight and twelve-pounders.

At the same time a mountain gun was adopted; this was light enough to be transported on a mule's back as well as the carriage. The material of a mountain battery was composed of six pieces carried by six mules, and six carriages carried by the same number, and a certain number of

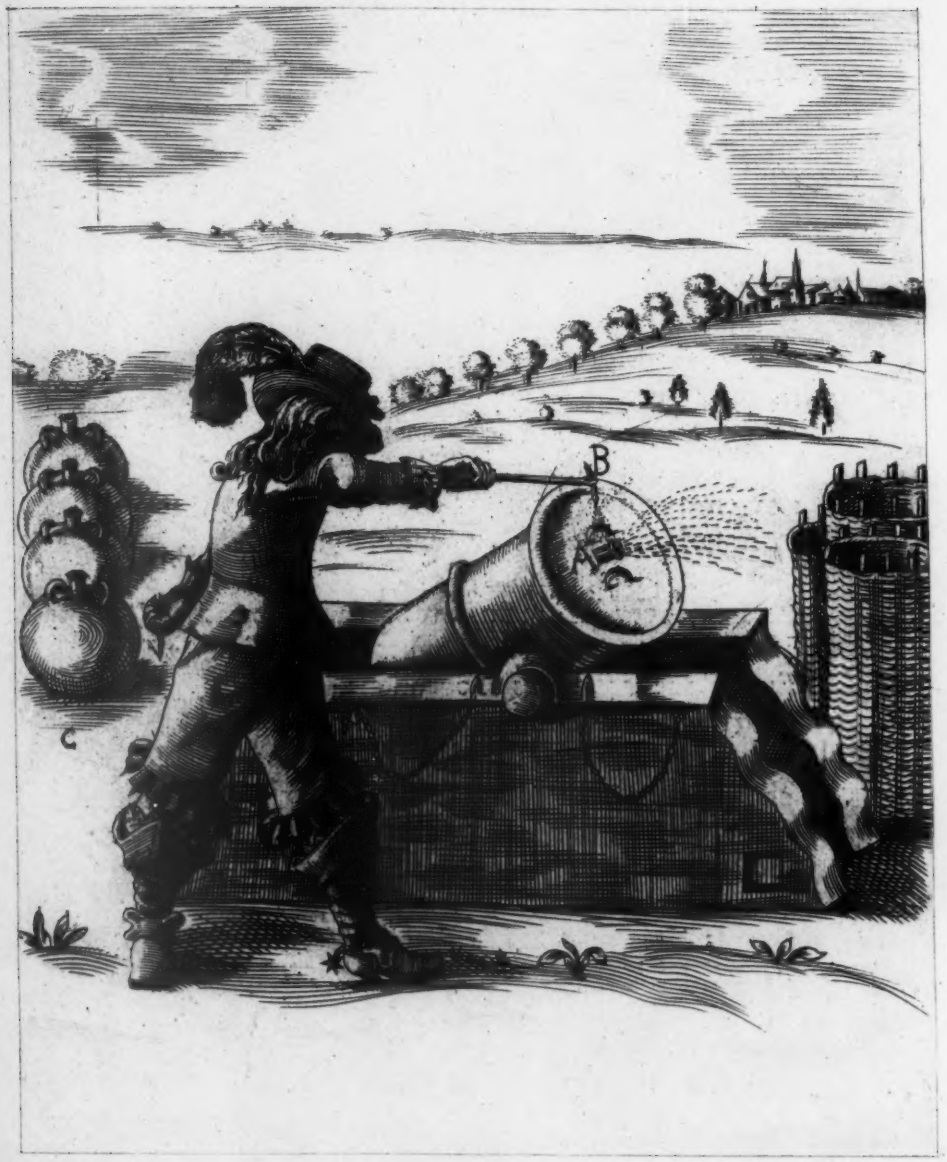
ammunition chests carried on mules' backs, to which the pieces mounted on carriages, and provided with shafts, could be attached. The first of these batteries was seen in the expedition to the Morea in 1828. As regards mounted artillery, which ought to revolutionize the tactics of war, it made its appearance in 1830, at the battle of Staoueli, and it aroused the enthusiasm of the soldiers in the army of Algeria. However, the Africans were afforded few opportunities for the display of its utility, whilst Algeria became the chosen ground of mountain artillery.

The sections of howitzers carried on mules, or yoked in shafts, helped the columns which they accompanied out of a difficulty more than once, and this was due rather to the moral effect which they produced upon the natives than to the actual damage which they caused. The African wars had the great drawback of accustoming our generals to lay slight stress upon artillery.

Gribeauval's field guns were in use till 1854. In order to make it clear why they were abandoned then, it is right to enter into some details as to the successive transformations of the projectiles which constitute, in fact, the most important part, perhaps, of the material of artillery, since they produce the desired effects upon troops, or physical obstacles.

We have seen that cast-iron balls were substituted for stone ones. Somewhat later the notion prevailed of using these balls in a red-hot state as incendiary missiles. In other words the firing of red-hot shot was devised; the difficulty in employing them, was soon found to consist in providing suitable furnaces for heating them, and in overcoming the still greater one of charging guns with red-hot shot, as well as the ineffectiveness of a plan which merely set fire to the objects struck by them.

Endeavours were made with slow success to manufacture hollow balls which were filled with powder to cause them to explode, and with combustibles to feed the fire. The problem lay in discovering a method for igniting the interior charge at the very point where it was wished that the projectile should burst; the principle of such a method was manifest, seeing that it sufficed to fix in the eye of the shell, that is the opening through which to pour the powder, a slowly burning fuze


B
A
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which would only set fire to the powder at the desired distance. It was requisite, then, to determine the time taken by the projectile to traverse the distance as well as the time taken in burning by the prepared fuze of which the rate of burning corresponded with that space of time. This was arrived at more or less accurately, but the principal point was igniting the fuze at the outset. To do this it was proposed to place the fuze in contact with the charge; when loading the piece the violence of the shot forced it back into the shell, thus causing the powder with which it was charged to go off before the shell, and in this way several serious accidents were caused, which temporarily led to the disuse of shells. It was only in 1634 that bombs and mortars made their first appearance in the French army at the siege of La Mothe, a small place situated on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne.

The mortar was a very short piece of large calibre, charged by hand, with trunnions resting on a carriage having low and heavy cheeks and no wheels; the bomb was a hollow ball, furnished with rings by which to hold and throw it and filled with powder and combustibles. After placing the bomb on the charge in the mortar, with the fuze exactly in the centre, the bombardier first heaped up earth over the bomb, leaving the fuze alone visible, and then he poured a priming of very sharp powder into the mortar's touch-hole, and being provided with two linstocks; he lit the fuze and, when it was burning properly, he ignited the priming of the mortar; this is what is styled firing with double ignition which is attended with drawbacks and evident risks. It was discovered by chance that when the bomb was not covered with earth the flame of the firing charge surrounded the bomb and sufficed to set light to the fuze. Then the mode of firing with single ignition was adopted and mortars were generally used without, however, being included in field artillery. The deficiency was supplied, as regards throwing hollow projectiles, by the howitzers which were rather longer and of smaller calibre, occupying in this twofold aspect the place between mortars and cannon, these being also loaded by hand, but being mounted on wheeled carriages.

Though howitzers were employed by the English and the Dutch, they

were not admitted by Valière into his system of artillery. Gribeauval adopted two, one being a six-inch, for use in the field. During the wars of the Revolution, a second howitzer, called a twenty-four-pounder, because its calibre was the same in inches as a cannon so designated (five inches, six lines) was added to the six-inch one : either the one or the other of these was included, in the proportion of a third, and sometimes a fourth only, in the composition of the batteries, and both were replaced in 1829 by two long howitzers of the same calibre, that is 0^m16 and 0^m15, being loaded by a rammer and firing a much stronger charge. A howitzer having the calibre of 0^m12 was adopted at the same time for mountain artillery. It is scarcely necessary to add that the projectiles thrown by these pieces were called shells.

Once loading by hand was given up, the howitzers were lengthened more and more; in 1840 and 1847 two were adopted for the armament of coasts and fortresses, having a calibre of 0^m22 and a length of 2^m490 and 2^m600 (the siege howitzer of 0^m22 not being longer than 1^m520). The howitzer for arming the coast was designated carronade and had a calibre of 0^m22 or of 80 (0^m22 being the diameter of the chamber of a piece which would take a spherical projectile of 80 pounds). These carronades formed part of the system of ordnance which bore the name of Paixhans' guns, from the name of the clever general who proposed in 1822 to defend the coasts by substituting for red-hot shot the fire of shells thrown at short angles and with great velocity, the fire of mortars and short howitzers being too curved to permit of coast batteries hitting the sides of ships.

* * *

Before proceeding farther, a word remains to be said about grape-shot of which the use goes back almost to the infancy of artillery. To spread the effect of a cannon's fire over a much larger surface than could be done with a ball, it was arranged to pack together in a canvas bag or a wooden box small projectiles such as bolts, scraps of iron and leaden bullets, the whole being called a cartridge ; the covering broke open on leaving the muzzle of the gun and the contents flying asunder hit right

and left. Later the same object was attained by using grape-shot, case-shot, etc., that is projectiles formed out of a wooden board smaller in diameter than that of the chamber, upon which a small ball was fastened by pitch, and covered with leaden bullets to a greater or lesser height, the whole being covered with a net or with wood or canvas. For this Gribeauval substituted cartridges filled with bullets, that is cylindrical cases in tinned iron with bottoms and with a covering of canvas filled with large bullets or, if preferred, with the small cast iron bullets commonly called "biscayans." The name grape-shot is the word employed by the public, the technical one is case-shot.

Grape-shot fire has left brilliant and sanguinary memories in military history; one may still picture to oneself the ranks of the Spanish infantry, opening at Rocroi on a signal from the brave Count de Fontaine, and unmasking a row of eighteen cannon which, belching forth grape, mowed down the soldiers of Condé, and the brilliant household cavalry of the King at Neerwinden closing their ranks when thinned by grape-shot and extorting the memorable exclamation from the Prince of Orange : "Oh! insolent nation."

In the wars of the Revolution and the Empire, the horse artillery more than once gained the day by galloping within two hundred metres of the enemy's lines and riddling them with grape. Sorbier exemplified this when, at the fight of Arlon, he continued to charge the partially destroyed Austrian squares with carabineers, whilst Senarmont did so at Friedland, when sweeping against the Russian infantry, and first arresting it by a fire of ball at five hundred metres, next advancing up to three hundred metres and then taking up a position at two hundred metres distant, he pounded it with grape. As a set-off, Augereau's corps was literally rolled in the snow at Eylau by the grape fire of fifty Russian pieces of light artillery; and at Fère-Champenoise, during the campaign in France, the heroic division of the national guard commanded by General Pacthod, after withstanding the attack of the fine and numerous cavalry of the Allies, was completely destroyed by grape. These are a few instances out of a thousand. Yet, however deadly grape may be, it is so at a short distance only, and the guns which discharge it are exposed to musketry

fire; thus it is by no means surprising that an attempt has been made to make it effective at a distance. The method of so doing consists in employing shrapnells, or case-shot a kind of shell charged with ball as the name implies. Properly speaking this is a sort of grape-shot which does not scatter at the muzzle of the piece, but at the moment when the shell, on bursting, allows the bullets to issue forth like grape. But many obstacles had to be overcome in forming such a projectile, amongst them being the regulation of the fuze for firing the charge at a suitable distance in front of, and above, the mark, otherwise the bullets would fall innocuous before reaching it, or would not scatter till after passing it; besides it is essential that the bursting power should suffice to split open the projectile without forcing the bullets too far apart (we shall recur to this last condition of which the realization now constitutes the great strength of our artillery).

* * *

However that may be, the question had been fairly settled by spherical shells at short ranges when, in 1854, on the eve of the Crimean campaign, the field artillery was transformed at the bidding of the Emperor Napoleon III. The ruling idea in this transformation was the substitution of carronades, pieces discharging either ball or shell, for the proportion of howitzers and cannon which constituted the batteries (two howitzers to four cannon).

Various occurrences during the wars of the First Empire had demonstrated the inconveniences of this plan. Both at Ratisbonne in 1805, and at Smolinsk in 1812, the howitzers remained useless whilst the cannon, being too few in number, were vainly directed to effect a breach in the old ramparts which guarded these cities : when Hougomont was attacked during the battle of Waterloo, precious time was wasted before our howitzers could be collected wherewith to set fire to the farm and rake the park. Then it was decided to adopt a carronade; its calibre was fixed at 12^{mm}, as the shell would be powerless if the size were less. If another step had not been taken in the path chalked out by Gribeauval

and if the length and weight of the piece had not been diminished, the weapon would have been too heavy, as such a calibre is exactly that of a twelve-pounder, hence the length was reduced to fourteen calibres, the weight of the charge to a fourth of the weight of the projectile, and that of the piece to one hundred times this weight. The result was to render a twelve-pounder of this description as light as an eight-pounder amongst cannon (600 kilogrammes) and it could be adapted to the carriage of such a cannon.

This material was used in the Crimean campaign and it largely contributed to the victories of the Alma, of Inkermann and Traktir. Marshal Saint-Arnaud's letter written after the battle of the Alma will never be forgotten : "Sire, Your Majesty's cannon have given tongue." The heroic and clever commander-in-chief of the Crimean army, whom the finger of Death had touched, flattered at once the Sovereign and the inventor. We feel sure that the inventor was the happier of the two.

Still the reform made in 1854 fell far short of what was generally demanded. Rifled muskets had been adopted for the infantry : rifled cannon were desired for the artillery. A quarter of a century had elapsed since the learned Robbins had prophetically exclaimed : "The nation which shall thoroughly understand the nature and advantages of rifled cannon, which shall be capable of manufacturing them, and whose armies shall adopt and use them skilfully, such a nation will acquire a superiority over the others as regards artillery equal to that which all the inventions up to this date could give to it."

These words which were printed in 1728 had been forgotten, or rather every kind of obstacle hindered their realization. In Robbins's day it was known how to trace on the inner sides of the chamber of a cannon, grooves in the form of elongated spirals; it was understood that the influence of such grooves on a projectile was to cause it to acquire by following them a rotatory motion on its axis; it was known that this rotatory motion guarded the projectile against the resistance of the air, like the top which, when properly spun, remains the longer in equilibrium on its point the more rapid its motion; but the effect of an oblong form of projectile in retaining velocity was not understood, and no other mode

of ramming was known than by hammering the leaden bullets into the chamber by means of a mallet.

The problem was solved as regards the musket before being solved as regards the cannon : the round, conical, leaden bullet, smaller in diameter than the chamber, was hollowed at the end so that by expanding in consequence of the force of the explosion, it closely fitted the tube and was thus forced into the grooves within it. Nothing analogous could be performed with a cast iron ball fired from a brass gun.

The system which we owe to Colonel Treuille de Beaulieu, one of the men most highly endowed from the twofold point of view of an inventive genius and of a constructor possessing a practical turn, consisted in affixing zinc wings to the cylindrical surface of the projectile which had the same opening as the grooves and exhibiting the same raised outline; this projectile, carefully placed in the chamber, reached the bottom whilst pressing upon the grooves by the sides of the wings and when forced out by the explosion of the charge, took the same direction in the reverse manner. The projectile was hollow, its form was that of an elongated cylinder with a conical point; its length was nearly double its diameter. A hole was bored in the flattened point through which to introduce the charge and screw the fuze. Solid balls were given up, and only shells charged with bullets were employed. Two sorts of cannon were used; rifled four-pounders and rifled twelve-pounders, that is according to the old designation of calibres (the weights of spherical or solid shot). An ordinary shell of a four-pounder weighed 4 kilogrammes; the shell of a twelve-pounder 11 kilogrammes 450. Later on a rifled eight-pounder was added of which the projectile weighed 7 kilogrammes. These pieces had the same relative length as Gribeauval's cannon (six calibres); the four-pounder weighed 304 kilogrammes only. A special material was provided for this cannon, styled the 1858 model, exhibiting on a smaller scale the same forms as the material of 1827 which was retained for the calibres of the twelve and eight-pounders. A rifled four-pounder mountain gun replaced, as regards the requirements of transport, the howitzer of 0m12; it was tried with the most satisfactory results during the Kabylian campaign in 1857.

The appearance of rifled cannon on the field of battle in Italy did not, perhaps, produce the overwhelming effect which was counted upon. Their long range, the fire of the rifled four and twelve-pounders being effective up to nearly three thousand metres, was nevertheless turned to account in several cases, particularly at the crossing of the Sesia by Marshal Canrobert's corps on the 31st of May, 1859; at the battle of Magenta, when the artillery of the second corps united under the command of General Auger, swept in the distance all the approaches to the railway; at Solferino, where General Forgeot arrested the movements of the Austrians by a flanking fire when they were driving the Piedmontese army before them. Perhaps it might have been better if the rifled cannon had been less successful in 1859 : in that case they would not have inspired so much confidence in the war of 1870, and our artillery would not have remained stationary whilst the Prussians were striving to improve theirs by adopting loading at the breech, being led so to do by their needle-gun. The war of 1866, during which their artillery played a secondary part, chiefly served to show the superiority of the needle-gun, and the peace between Austria and Prussia had not been signed before France had adopted the musket of the 1866 model. The new armament of our infantry had cost more than 120 million francs, and rendered a loan necessary. The government, taking what was, possibly, an exaggerated view of the disposition of the majority in the Legislative Chamber, flinched from expending the amount required for transforming the artillery. Besides, it was generally believed that victory was assured owing to the vast superiority of the musket of the 1866 model (known by the name of Chassepot), and still more by the intervention of a mysterious engine, manufactured in secret under the eyes of the Emperor, the repeating cannon, better known by the name of the *mitrailleuse*.

The mitrailleuse consisted of a cluster of twenty-five rifled barrels held together by an outer tube which made it resemble at a distance an ordinary cannon, and of a form of breech holding 25 cartridges which went off in succession uninterruptedly through the action of a crank, and which could be instantly replaced by 25 others, so that the fire was continuous without any change in the pointing being required, whilst the

breech could be raised or lowered and the piece turned to right or left with the result, so to say, of sweeping the ground. In short the mitrailleuse was a species of mechanical musketry, but in no respect a piece of ordnance.

In several instances the mitrailleuse fulfilled the expectations which had been formed and produced the most sanguinary results. Thus the repulse of Wedell's brigade of Prussians with the loss of two-thirds of its effective strength, at the battle of the 16th of August, was caused quite as much by the fire of the mitrailleuse as by that of general de Cissey's infantry; on the 18th of August the batteries of the ninth German army corps were silenced by the mitrailleuse; at the battle of Villiers-sur-Marne, on the 30th of November, it checked the advance of Saxon Infantry before the village of Bry. The Bavarians at Loigny and at Poupry on the 1st of December, the soldiers of Prince Frederick-Charles at Chevilly on the 3rd of December, and at Saint-Jean-sur-Erve on the 15 of January, 1871, suffered terribly from the fire of the mitrailleuse, but these engines with a range limited to 1500 metres could not stand against the German artillery which crushed them at 2,000 metres without risk of being damaged in turn. At the outset of the battle of Frœschwiller eighteen mitrailleuses had to be sent to the rear because they were unable to reply to the long row of batteries of the 5th and 11th Prussian corps.

Our four-pounders displayed a marked inferiority in the same position. In pieces loaded at the muzzle the exigencies of loading necessitate a difference between the diameter of the chamber and that of the projectile: hence there is an empty space which is called windage and which, allowing the gas from the powder to pass, lessens the range and, at the same time, owing to the projectile not fitting closely, a part of it being lost, it is affected by the movements before leaving the barrel and deviates from its course.

But the chief cause of the inferiority of our cannon was the use of time fuzes. There are indeed two methods of igniting the charge within a shell so as to make it burst: the one being the percussion fuze which goes off when the projectile encounters an obstacle, the other the time fuze which is fired at the moment of its leaving the muzzle and which



is regulated so as not to explode the charge except at a fixed distance. Percussion fuzes were put aside rather too hastily on the ground that they were dangerous to carry. The time fuze which was alone accepted for firing in the field did not cause an explosion, excepting at the ranges of fifteen hundred and two thousand metres, and in consequence of this the projectile produces its destructive effect only within two zones, the one being comprised between fifteen hundred and eighteen hundred metres, the other between twenty-eight hundred and three thousand metres. Outside these zones the enemy had nothing to fear from shells thrown by four-pounders; beyond three thousand metres these shells did not even produce the effects of solid shot. All the French shells were seen exploding in the air and far from the mark in the artillery duel, which, in the evening of the 31st of August, ended the first day of the battle of Servigny.

The regrettable results of time fuzes on that occasion must be deplored the more as the chief cause of the inferiority of our artillery, because during the second part of the war, when it was determined to use percussion shells exclusively, our rifled cannon maintained its superiority over that of the enemy, more particularly our twelve and eight-pounders. After the fight at Villejuif on the 23rd of September, 1870, General Vinoy made a declaration to this effect as did d'Aurelle and Chanzy in their accounts of the battle of Coulmiers, of the fights at Villepion and at Poupry, and of the battle of Chevilly. Ducrot did not hesitate to ascribe the salvation of his army after the battle of Champigny to the fire of the artillery covering his retreat.

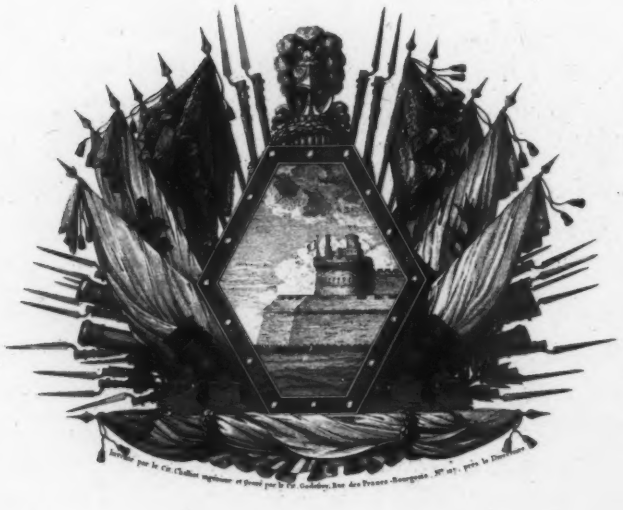
If the battles delivered before Metz on the 16th and 18th of August, 1870, are carefully studied, it must be acknowledged that the inferiority in the material of the French artillery was compensated for as much as possible by the accuracy of aim, the rapidity in manœuvering it, and the effectiveness of the twelve-pounders which, unfortunately, were too few in number.

To ascribe our defeats to the artillery is to forget on the one hand the incredible shortcomings of those in supreme command, and on the other the effect produced by our batteries every time that a skilful commander,

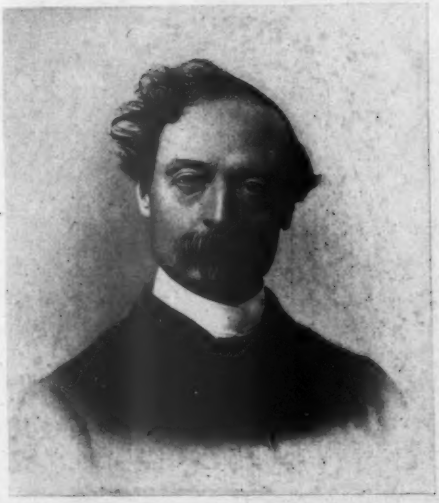
instead of scattering them, brought them together as General Bourbaki did as regards the Imperial Guard, on the evening of the 16th, and as Marshal Canrobert did as regards the artillery of the 6th corps on the 18th. These two battles, and that of the 16th in particular, when the vast superiority of our rifle over that of the Germans is taken into account, demonstrated once more the truth of the observations made by Dumouriez in 1793 after the battle of Tirlemont : "The French soldier lays great stress on the superiority of the ordnance. The confidence and dash of our troops depend more or less upon the success of this arm, and the soldier's bravery is diminished in a marked degree when he perceives that the artillery has been checked or discouraged."

THOUMAS, General.

(To be continued.)



ORCHARDSON AND HIS WORK

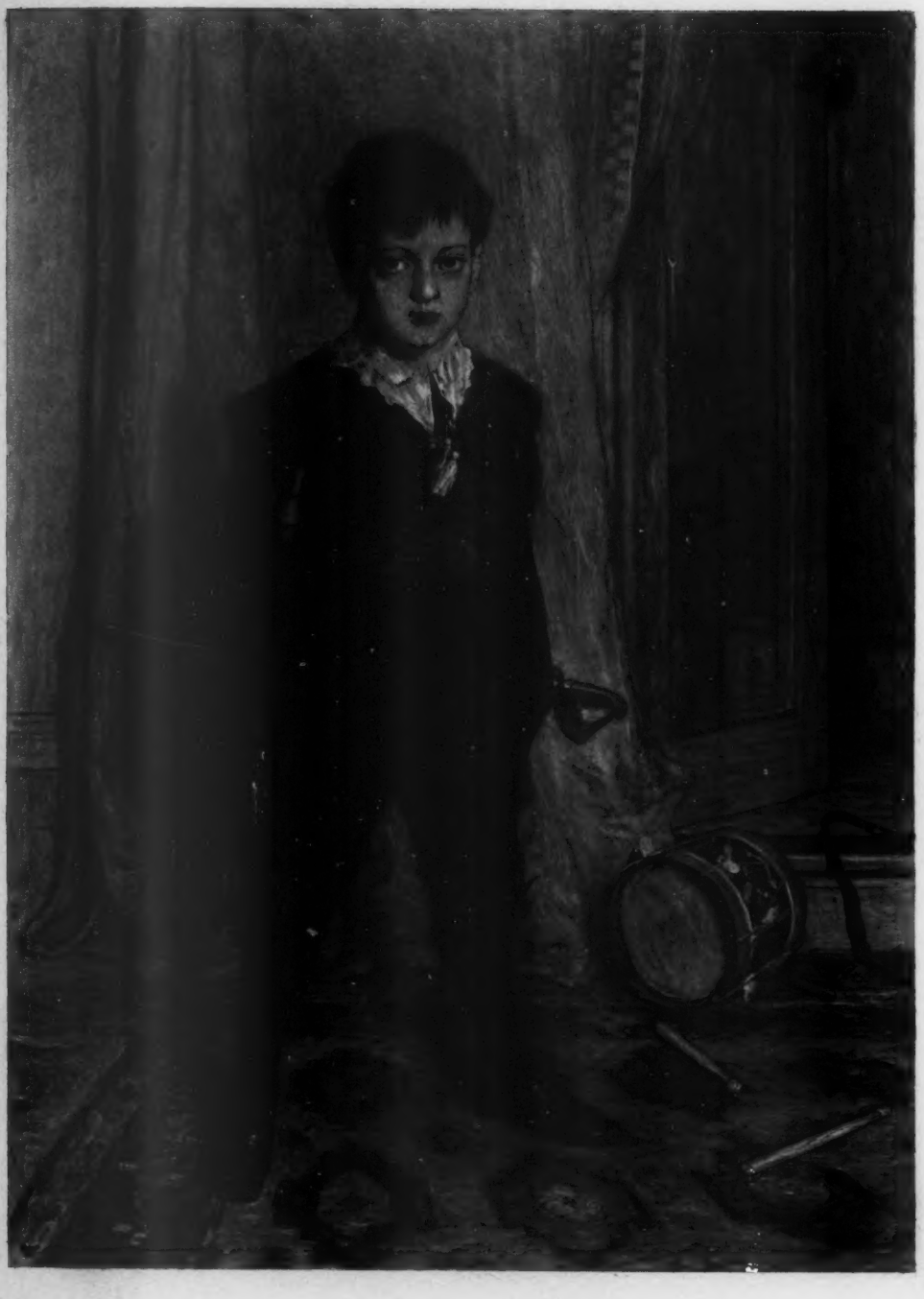


Mr. Orchardson is one of the painters as to whose merits the big public and people who love Art are thoroughly in accord. In England these painters are few. You cannot invite the connoisseur to be enthusiastic over Mr. Frith, to discern extraordinary character in the work of Mr. Sant, wonderful flesh-painting in the well drawn nudities of Mr. Goodall, virile force in Mr. Marcus Stone, an admirable impulsiveness in the method of Mr. Leader, an ever fresh vision of Nature in the landscape of Vicat Cole. I make no mention, be it noted, of the incompetent—of the popular success that is only an accident. And, on the other hand, you cannot, with hope of prompt response, invite your big public—which is essentially inartistic—to become aware that it is with artistic problems alone that Mr. Whistler has been dealing; that Mr. Albert Moore is unconcerned with sentiment and is satisfied with fine combinations of colour and line; that Mr. Hook in painting Nature has insisted on the selected spot and the selected hour, and has brought an almost Venetian palette to the

treatment of the Cornish sea. But there are a few painters,—and I should say that Mr. Watts and Sir Frederick Leighton, and Sir John Millais and Mr. Orchardson are at present the foremost of them—whom the public and the true student agree together to accept. Very different reasons induce that agreement. There is this reason for the student; that for the bourgeois; that for the fashionable person. But the agreement is found; nor is it generally difficult to say why it is found. To say it, in two words, as regards Mr. Orchardson, will be to express his art in brief. The painter likes Mr. Orchardson for his technical mastery; for his ease and flexibility of brush-work, for his harmonies of colour at once suave and splendid. The outside public likes Mr. Orchardson because Mr. Orchardson understands a good deal of humanity—condescends to be occupied with its fortunes—tells agreeably a story that has humour in it, or that has sentiment.

* * *

It was not in a single day that Mr. Orchardson managed to re-unite these qualities so long divorced—qualities of draughtsman and painter, of observer, comedian, poet. His progress has never been very rapid, and for many years it was hardly looked forward to. He is of Scottish birth—born in 1835—and, living in his youth in Edinburgh, there was not withheld from him an artistic education better in certain respects than any that could have been obtained in London, at the Royal Academy Schools. Yet in boyhood and youth he made no particular mark. The art school he attended was that of the Edinburgh Board of Manufactures, which has trained many an excellent painter. The work done there is somewhat more independent than that at our Royal Academy. And young Orchardson, even when not successful, was bound to be independent—independent, that is to say, in his steps, if not actually in the result of them. Even as it was, he got into a certain number of little troubles there, at the Scottish school. Having copied a Guercino already—so he tells me—he was taken into the Scottish National Gallery to copy a Van Dyck. He didn't want to copy Van Dyck. He was not so foolish a young man as not to admire Van Dyck, but he wished rather to go into the Life School.



That interested him. Nothing like the excitement and the stimulus of being face to face with Nature. He asked for that.

When it became likely that I should speak of Orchardson with a certain amount of detail, in this magazine, I wrote to a friend in Edinburgh—learned and trustworthy—for some account, from the qualified Scotch point of view, of the painter's earlier work. "Much of Mr. Orchardson's earlier work," the Keeper of the Scottish National Gallery replies to me, "much of Mr. Orchardson's earlier work, done in Edinburgh was portraiture. I saw an example of this the other day : a portrait of his brother-in-law, George Williamson. It is rather delicate, but rather feeble—quite on the lines of the older Scottish painters of the time. I saw a fortnight ago at Derby (to the Gallery of which town it is lent by its owner) his 'Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne,' exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1867. It is an excellent picture; sweet and delicate in colour, and very spirited, and dramatic in action." And further Mr. Gray writes, "Before his style was fairly formed, Orchardson passed through a period marked by great paucity and dryness of surface : much grey appearing in the colouring, which was rather sour and chilly. An example of this is 'The Forest Shrine,' in the possession of Dr. Mather of Glasgow—— The women too that he introduced into his pictures at this time were of a peculiar and curious type; thin-featured, white-faced, with a hectic flush, and altogether with a frail consumptive-looking grace."

This is past history. But before we arrive at the mature work—at the work of the last fifteen years—let another detail of the earlier time be chronicled. In the first or second volume of a blameless publication known as *Good Words* there is a curious series of early woodcuts designed by Mr. Orchardson. They illustrate a story called *Lady Somerville's Maidens,* which the world never regarded very much, and which it has now quite forgotten. They are feeble and uncanny, and so contrast very greatly with the admirably spirited and powerful woodcut designs which Mr. Orchardson's friend John Pettie was producing about the same time. Mr. Pettie and Mr. Orchardson are about contemporaries, but Mr. Pettie's success was the earlier.

In 1863, when Mr. Orchardson exhibited "The Challenge," he was not mature, but he was exceedingly promising. That was one year before his arrival in London, and in 1866 came "Christopher Sly." Both pictures show the painter's frequent pre-occupation at that period—especially when he happened to be most fortunate—with scenes of humour. Shakesperean invention helped him with the one work : for the other he had to depend, presumably, on unaided creation. Both pictures excited a certain measure of remark and admiration when they were exhibited. Both of them were produced at a moment more specially devoted than the present one to anecdotal painting,—at a moment when in that department of Art the elder Leslie had not so very long ago resigned the sceptre to Mr. E. M. Ward. The public of that day—even the artists of that day—accepted an anecdotal painting which was less accomplished than it had been wont to be; and Mr. Orchardson's, we may be sure—though he was not the master of beautiful brush-work and noble colour which he has since made himself—was accomplished enough to be something of a surprise. We don't require to tell the story of the "Christopher Sly"—which a Paris which did not read Shakespeare very much in those days, admired at the International Exhibition of 1867—but stress must be laid on the delicate and sufficing humour of "The Challenge." "The challenge," Mr. Dafforne reminds us, in a notice of Mr. Orchardson written as long ago as 1870,—very interesting as a record, but strangely and most significantly silent on all the technical successes or faults which engage the attention of the newer Criticism,—"the challenge is borne by a mincing Cavalier to a sturdy Roundhead, at whose side stands a Puritan minister, evidently a man not accustomed to fight with any but spiritual weapons; for he is endeavouring to persuade his co-religionist to decline the document which the Cavalier, with a low bow and humorous expression, presents to him on the point of a sword. It is a challenge to mortal combat, for the paper is tied with a piece of black ribbon."

Both of these works may be open to criticism from the recent and painter-like point of view; but neither was open to the charge which Mr. Dafforne, in 1870, did bring against so much of Mr. Orchardson's

work—the charge practically, that it lacked composition—the charge often repeated since, of unoccupied and therefore useless space—"Land to let" was the would-be humorous way of putting it. In that charge there is a measure of truth, but it has been insisted upon too much and made too generally. It has been insisted upon quite wrongly in the case of the "Talbot and the Countess of Auvergne." Why has no one perceived the advantage of the space that intervenes between the lady and the group—its dramatic possibilities, so to speak? And the same with regard to the "Social Eddy" of a good many years later. The space told its story. And again, the expressiveness of the very long table that divides the *tête-à-tête* in "The Mariage de Convenance." But I anticipate.

Having become an Associate of the Royal Academy not long after the success of "Christopher Sly," Orchardson became a full Academician at the moment of the success of "Queen of the Swords." That was in 1877. No want of composition can ever rightly have been charged against this attractive picture : on the contrary, completeness of composition is in it almost as visible as is the grace of each separate person of the elegant drama. In one of the figures of more than one old-world dance, a line of ladies passes under the crossed swords of a couple of lines of men. Some such movement in the *gavotte* was utilised by Mr. Orchardson in his well-remembered canvas. The thing was suggested to him by a passage in Sir Walter Scott's *Pirate*, but neither the description by the Scottish novelist nor, I suppose, the figure in the actual dance was absolutely followed. The scene of the spectacle is laid in England : the time about 1788—the middle of the reign of George the Third, one might say naturally, but somehow when Mr. Orchardson is concerned, it becomes easier to say "the end of the reign of Louis Seize." For the French grace of conception evident in this picture—the lightness and flexibility of the female figures, sweet and gay—all that is noticeable in different degrees, in so many of the painter's works, that one is tempted to add the exact nature of Mr. Orchardson's art—the precise quality which makes it by itself—to all the other testimonies with which Scotland abounds to the strength of French influence there. I asked Mr. Orchardson, with curious care, whether there was actually

French blood in him. No; but there was Spanish—and that I think is quite accounted for in certain manifestations of his art. But he is French too—as French as any *tourelle* that from the corner of the Scottish Lowland castle, looks down, *dépaysée,* on the chill river and the dull plain, and wonders where may be the shining Loire and the green softness of Anjou.

"A Social Eddy" came in the year following the year of "Queen of the Swords"—its period that of the First Empire, which is the period of Mr. Orchardson and the period of Mr. Charles Green. About the same time there was a portrait of Mrs. Pettie. In 1880 came "Napoleon on board the Bellerophon"—the famous scene in which the monarch, whose only majesty remains in a still commanding character, sets out for exile. Again the favourite and, as I think, the effective device of the long space —a space of deck this time—which extends between the chief and the subordinate figures. With folded arms and bent head, the one stands in the front, embittered, foiled, frustrated,—the game is over. Respectfully and almost sadly—as if in presence of a death, the death of a fame—stand the others, the British officers.

That was one of the rather rare occasions on which the painter we discuss happened to paint History, and the remark suggests to us a thought on the divisions in his work which may as well be expressed here and now. Some people would call Mr. Orchardson a painter of Genre, a painter of History, and a painter of Portraits—they would so classify and consider him. But as a matter of fact while his Portraiture —veracious, sober, picturesque, refined, as our example of it shows—must, by its dealing with pure fact, be placed apart, there is really no substantial division between his Genre and his History. He has never painted History of set purpose : he has never posed as the accurate chronicler of anything except Humanity itself and the lines and colours with which it is endowed and surrounded. And if divisions must be made, other divisions than that one between History and Genre seem to us more reasonable, though no division that is hard and fast can be reasonable at all, and we pass, arrested by no artificial fence nor natural boundary, over field and field of his art. But rather than keep visibly apart Genre



which may have so much of History, and History which must have so much of elegant Genre, we would note the differences between the comic and the pathetic, the dramatic and the simply graceful, the "costume pictures" and the pictures in which, with courage shared in by Mr. Gregory and Mr. Whistler, he has dealt with the people he lives amongst, with the dresses of every day. To note such differences may have the excuse of utility. It may help—seeing that failure attends him in not one of these various attempts—it may help to make evident his range.

Again, it is worth while to point out that what range there is in this matter of subject has been maintained for the most part over all the years of Orchardson's practice. From the first, at certain or uncertain intervals, he has painted portraits. Comedy has been with him from the first. From the first, pathos. The two things which I do discern, not as a theory in him, not as a determination, but as an unconscious tendency, are first, a more frequent reliance than of old upon his own invention, and secondly, an increased willingness—I don't say preference—for the scenes of his own epoch : the people, the raiment and the furniture in the Mayfair and the Portland Place of to day. I do not think that, of modern dress, he has rendered, as some have rendered, the piquancy that is its peculiar quality. His own peculiar quality is dignity and grace. But he has made modern dress acceptable : he has understood how to make it inoffensive. He would not have been capable, in the earlier time, of grappling, as in the "Mariage de Convenance" with the "Mariage à la mode" of our moment; and one reason of this is that in the earlier time there was not at his command such abundance of technical resource, such a sober glory of the palette,—no, nor so assured an observation of life—as we see in him this morning.

As regards technical completeness, it has been reached most of all, probably, in what are among the later of his works : in the portrait of Mrs. Joseph, in the sequel to the "Mariage de Convenance," and in the "First Cloud." But unless the picture of "Her Mother's Voice"—that meditative isolation of the widower which Mr. Orchardson has lately recorded—should, as a very simple subject sometimes does,

interest us even more than the presentation of a dramatic moment in two lives or a brilliant scene in many, the most impressive and the richest of Mr. Orchardson's at all recent themes must be held to have been treated in the "Mariage de Convenance" itself, in the "Voltaire at the Duc de Sully's" and in the "Salon de Madame Récamier." The art of pure painting being granted, let us dwell a little on the dramatic art of which at all events two of these remarkable pictures afford very ample evidence.

Of the two, the "Voltaire" is certainly one : yet it must be said that the "Voltaire," along with some of the attractions, displays some of the disabilities, of the anecdotal theme. You must know the story already or you must read about it in the Royal Academy catalogue, if you are properly to appreciate the painter's skill in characterisation, in dramatic expression. You see, around a beautiful dinner-table of the Eighteenth Century, many male guests, fashionable, aristocratic, and all of them disturbed or amused, you do not quite know why. For, removed from them,—with his place vacant at the table—stands the little man, the luckless hero of the incident, passionate or petulant : apparently inconsolable. Why does he so furiously rage? Well, the catalogue will tell you, if some slight knowledge of the great French portraits has not told you before, that this impassioned and unappeased person is no other than Voltaire. The catalogue will further tell you, if History and Memoirs have not told you already, that the hero of the incident was summoned from the table, that he has been insulted below stairs, by the enemy, the haughty swell, who called on him, and that he has returned to pour out the story of his wrongs—ill advised—to an audience in the main not sympathetic. Wonderfully indeed did Mr. Orchardson realise the brilliant and illustrious group : the concentrated passion of the famous writer, all nerves and fire, and sarcasm, and rage. But how difficult a task! And though the canvas charms us by its characterisation, by its design and by its pure painting, by its grace of colour and costume, are we not yet better pleased—for are not the conditions of pictorial art more wisely recognized?—when Mr. Orchardson invites us to consider a story that can tell itself upon canvas alone?



"The Tender Chord," with its pretty sentiment, is just such a story. "Her Mother's Voice" is again just such a story. And such a story too is that of the "Salon de Madame Récamier," are we granted but a key to the personages—Buffon, Madame de Staël, Talleyrand, Chateaubriand—and such a story is certainly that of the "Mariage de Convenance," with the advantage that it is highly dramatic, very moving, into the bargain. For, whatever may be the measure of truth in Mr. Henry James's brilliant defence of the tale that has no incident, there will—if the conditions of painting can be properly observed at the same time—be always an additional interest in the picture whose incident, whose imaginative suggestion, is not quite so meagre.

Now Mr. Orchardson, in the "Mariage de Convenance," hit on a theme which had at least two advantages. It was not a new theme, but there was a new way of presenting it—which, in all the arts, is the essential point. And it was a theme of which our English public would endure the presentation much more readily by the art of the painter than by the art of the dramatist or novelist. Look at the hard and stubborn, tall and brilliant yellow-haired woman, of the dangerous age when Will and Passion are strongest—the age, I was just about to mention it, but I refrain in prudence and pity. Look at the elderly man who in his poor bad way has really cared for the woman, but who is crushed now—his whole organisation deranged by the brutality of her comments. Look at her, strong and triumphant, and at him, shaking and white, paying the penalty of a score of years of folly, and of the crowning folly of his marriage with her—and find me the novelist or dramatist in England who shall venture on the narrative of all these horrors, the knowledge of which meanwhile comes to us subtly, comes to us inoffensively, in Mr. Orchardson's canvas, under the veil of lovely colour and selected line! Would even Mr. Hardy or even Mr. Stevenson—our deep and delicate students of human nature, who write in great measure for men—venture upon that? Would even Mr. Henry James? And if not, could we expect that it should be ventured upon with the right frankness and the right perfection by the novelist of the matron and the second-rate young woman—the novelist of the blameless tour in the picturesque district? No. In Lite-

rature this "Mariage de Convenance" which Mr. Orchardson has depicted, is a subject—I seem to see it—for Balzac alone. Guy de Maupassant might, perchance, revel brilliantly in the ugly side of it. For Zola's more hideous moments it would not be hideous enough. But then it would be too sordid to inspire him with the pathos of the *Page d'Amour,* with the poetry of the *Faute de l'Abbé Mouret.*

* * *

Well—we have considered now, in a measure of detail, what Mr. Orchardson has done : the kind of subjects to which, during a quarter of a century of the practice of painting, he has mainly addressed himself. A final word on the methods of his labour, and on a department of painting which he has hitherto left untouched.

Save for the somewhat rare instances in which the piquancy of a literary anecdote has had a special interest for him and has caused him to overrate the possibilities of its pictorial expression, Orchardson has chosen subjects on the strength alone of their suitability to painting, and, more especially as time has gone on, has the difficulty increased of separating conception from execution in his work. He makes hardly any sketches : what one may call no elaborate memoranda. A subject and its treatment grow together in his mind. In embryo there are of course, with an artist of his observation and reflection, no less than a hundred themes, and as each one first occurs to him, at I know not what stray moment, a little plan—a something, a nothing,—is jotted down in a way that must be quite illegible to every one but himself. "The moment of *bien-être*"—it has been well said—"is the moment of invention." Mr. Orchardson's "moment of *bien-être*" is not the moment of rough jotting, but that at which some one subject, out of the hundred suggested ones, takes form in his mind. "Takes form," do I say? But what it takes as certainly is colour. Before ever the empty canvas is upon the easel, the composition, which will be slowly conveyed to it with the labour of many weeks, is practically finished in the artist's head, in hue as well as in line. What that shows is strength of memory, stability

of purpose, nervous force. What it shows too is the distance Mr. Orchardson stands at from the mere copyist of nature—of humanity, of landscape, and of still life—who asks of humanity, of landscape and of still life, that they shall do his work for him—shall group themselves that he may merely imitate them. "There are no pictures in Nature. There are only the materials for pictures." Boucher and Lancret agreed together that the grass was too green.—"Nature is wanting in harmony and seductiveness." And Mr. Whistler—very brief and to the point—"Nature is generally wrong."

But of the "materials for pictures" it can never be imagined by the intelligent person familiar with his canvases, that Mr. Orchardson does not make careful and sensitive and, I would add, even reverent use, whether those materials be the face of a sitter—some warm blonde with yellow hair, some richer brunette, walnut and rose-coloured, to be seen against a background the colour of dark wine—or the splendid play of light on sober curtain and subtle wall-tint, or the shining modern dinner-table with silver and Sèvres, or, as in the portrait of Mrs. Winchester Clowes, the green and yellows of the painted and tasselled fan, or best of all, perhaps, as in the picture of Mrs. Robertson, the full-bloomed roses, packed as it were, damask and pink and crimson, into a blue bowl running over with colour. Certainly "the materials for pictures" have been a delight to the painter.

Mr. Orchardson considers that he is "always on the verge" of painting an important landscape. Meanwhile, except as very occasional background, and that chiefly in the earlier days, he has painted no landscape at all. Perhaps he will remain "upon the verge." Perhaps he will lay down his brush, having been sustained to the end by the interest of one desire as yet unaccomplished, amongst the many quite worthily fulfilled.

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp." But if on the other hand the painter of the "Salon de Madame Récamier," and of "Queen of the Swords" and of "Her Mother's Voice" and of the "Napoleon" should after all in the fulness of time be delivered of his landscape—like Sir Joshua with his view from Richmond Hill—it will be something more than the record of

the fact before him. Whatever it may lack, it will have, I am certain, like the landscapes of our elder masters—like Turner's, Wilson's,—dignity and style. And outward Nature will not be seen through Mr. Orchardson's eyes in any fashion discordant with that in which, true to his own individuality, he has long learnt to behold the tall and sweeping figure, the stately hangings, the pilastered room. Here as there, it will be a part of his refining mission to transcribe and to exalt. Nothing can be literal, and nothing very simple in his work. There must, in the music of his making, be full deep chords and intricate harmonies. His has never been, and it becomes still less and less, the art of the naïve impression. Does he deal with the Nature of every day, then the Nature of every day must contentedly be decked in the colours of his palette. On those terms, only, will he have her. The damsel, sometimes shabby, sometimes careless, sometimes headstrong—but engaging at bottom—must pose with decorum, be arranged in a garment of grace, and, for the nonce, mind her manners.

FREDERICK WEDMORE.



SISTERS OF CHARITY



Lingering like a survival of the past, the Sister of Charity is an anachronism in modern life. As the poke-cape of a little nun threads its way through the crowd and fevered turmoil of Paris—a greyer shade against the grey walls—the passers-by turn to look at her with mingled surprise and sympathy—the instinctive sympathy which is stirred by the mystery of another and a different existence. The humanity of the Paris streets is singularly susceptible; the sight of the humble Sister will rouse, in many of those who gaze at her, a swarm of vague impressions which flutter up, and then settle again into the limbo of a torpid conscience. The fleeting figure, passing like a messenger bird, has power to call up these feelings, to remind the man who is hurrying on to some selfish pleasure or some act of narrow greed, that life may have other, nobler, and purer aims. And if his mind can pause for the space of a few steps on his way, it

may dwell on a class of ideas which rarely haunt a wordly brain; self-denial, self-sacrifice.

And he is proud of them.

This is a reflection which escaped the penetrating bitterness of La Rochefoucauld : Man is always proud of the virtues of his fellow-men.

The little grey Sister is, however, but seldom seen in the streets of modern Paris. The nuns of the contemplative orders remain in the seclusion of convent walls, the Sisters of the charitable orders only come out to flit from the bedside of the dead or the convalescent to that of another sufferer. Not that she is scared by the turmoil of the city; by no means. Men stare at her, but her ingenuous eyes are scarcely startled by what they look on. Her grey woollen gown and shrouding white head-dress of starched linen are a reminder of an earlier age more simple minded than ours, and certainly less unsightly. It is, in fact, the costume worn by women of the working-class at the time of Saint Vincent de Paul, the early years of the seventeenth century.

The dress is not devoid of a subtle charm, nor of the elegance of fitness. It has a hint of wings. The flutter of the cap suggests that of a bird. The harmony of dim colouring is singularly appropriate to the duties of a nurse; the weary eyes of sickness cannot be aggrieved by those subdued tones. The grey and white of the Sister's uniform is so sober as to have no irritating effect on the eye, and harmonises with the monotonous, noiseless stir of the same person, perpetually busy in the same room.

But is the Sister of Charity really an anachronism in modern life? Nay, she only seems so. It is easy to see that the modern mind is in fact hurrying back to mysticism; it is an inevitable result of the law of reaction.

In a handsome house in the Avenue de Villiers, in the thick, as it were, of our wealthiest painters, the Paris branch of the Sisterhood of "Jesus in the Temple" has taken up its abode. They are nursing Sisters under the direction of a Superior, their reverend Mother, Sister Sainte-Marie Walbourg, and of a Father Superior, the Abbé Roullin. This sisterhood was founded in London by Cardinal Wiseman, and the parent

institution still flourishes at Clifton Wood, near Bristol. It has ramified and crossed the Channel, and branches have been established at Paris, and at Maisons-Laffitte. It now has six homes in France.

But Paris has no enthusiasm for devoted souls; she keeps her solemn pageants to honour her orators. An annual adjudication of prizes under the cold dome of the Academy, and now and then the presentation of a cross of the Legion of Honour—as in the case of Mademoiselle Nicole, the matron of the hospital of the Salpêtrière—are the utmost glory ever bestowed on a charitable association. But what does it matter! What can noble souls care for public and official demonstrations? Those tender hearts know no vanity. They expand and bloom in solitude, they are the flowers of the rarest type of humanity. They first gather together in country villages or small towns. It was indeed at Châtillon-les-Dombes, a village of La Bresse, that the first community of Hospital-Sisters was formed. On New Year's day 1617, a poor family was stricken by some contagious fever in the outskirts of this hamlet. The sick children were destitute of help. As chance would have it, Vincent de Paul passed that way. The apostle went up into the pulpit, and addressed the multitude; he painted a picture of the misery and suffering he had just witnessed. His was the captivating eloquence of simplicity and sincerity. Those who listened were ingenuous souls. The preacher moved them deeply. On quitting the church they went at once to the house of sickness, loaded with provisions and clothes. The most eager of these visitors were women. Hélyot tells us that—"Then Vincent de Paul held a conference with some of the most zealous and wealthy women of the parish as to the means of setting some order in the help that was to be given to these sick folk and others, who, in time to come, might be in the same evil plight."

And this was the origin of the Sisters of Charity. The order has but one characteristic, its entire simplicity. Crowds of women were at once to be seen, gentle creatures, in grey and white, and throughout the ages will still be seen hovering with deft and noiseless officiousness, like benignant phantoms, round the bed of suffering. Vincent de Paul, with the intuition of a seer, knew well how far the impetus he had given

would last. He at once formed a scheme, and put it into execution with the swift and persistent energy which is often to be found in men of extreme gentleness. He drew up a code of rules, and submitted it to his Superiors. He chose a certain number of women from those who stood ready to second him, and who were to wait upon him once a month, and report all that had been done. The charitable Sisterhood was an accomplished fact. At first the Founder intended it for country places only. Large towns are the focus of miseries so many and so fearful, that he dared not grapple with them. How could they ever be holpen? In men of his fine temper a timid exterior covers a mettle which nothing can daunt. In 1629 he organised the first sisterhood of nurses in Paris, in the parish of Saint-Sauveur, and it soon became very numerous.

These founders of charitable institutions have no hesitations. Indeed, is it not the very mark by which a creative mind may be known? Scepticism is a barren herb, and fanaticism bears fruit, whatever its aim may be. "Men need no masters to teach them doubt," said a thinker.

This confidence in the fruition of the morrow has been seen again and again, at the beginning of such works of charity. Women especially are gifted with a steadfastness of faith that nothing can move. A band of the Little Sisters of the Poor came to settle in Paris in 1849. The cholera was raging and mowing down the people. It was a time of universal misery in Paris. The Sisters had no home and no money. This did not prevent their giving their care to the poor wretches who fell victims to the plague. It was only after long patience that, at last, they found a home in a house in the Rue Saint-Jacques, and saw their difficulties yield to their determined perseverance.

Two years later the tenth division of the National Guard called on the Sisters to help them in founding an almshouse. They had fourteen thousand francs to begin with. A house was taken, and two sisters came to clean it and put it in order. An officer of the National Guard joined them—it was after the "period of 1848," when a wonderful gust of transcendental philanthropy was stirring men's souls. The officer, too, took broom and duster in hand and helped the Sisters in their task. A statuette of the Virgin and a couple of sacred prints constituted the furniture



of the establishment. A poor man came to the door the first night, begging for shelter. There was no bed for him, but how could they turn him from the door? Ingenuity and energy set to work, and by night there was a bed for the beggar, and two straw mattresses for the sisters.

If we look round us even now, we shall find similar examples. They lurk beneath the surface. The clamour of sceptics drowns the murmur of low voices speaking words of consolation and promise. The moralists of our time proclaim it as one of base corruption; for my part I like to think that the centuries repeat themselves.

It is true, indeed, that in every age the sum total of devoted lives is infinitesimally small as compared with the selfish and mean. The two terms of the antithesis are grossly unequal. At the same time we may remember the beautiful parable told, in language of mystic and impassioned eloquence, by the great poet of *La Légende des Siècles*. Murad, the fiery Sultan, had spent his years of rule in inventing and exercising the most ingenious cruelties on every human creature he could lay hands on. One day, walking down a crowded street, he saw a pig with its throat cut, bleeding to death on a butcher's stall. Flies were torturing the dying beast, and with a sweeping gesture as though he were sentencing kings, the Sultan drove them off. That evening, under the sudden touch of Azrael's wing, Murad stood before the Great Judge; he saw the awful scales; in one the crushing pile of his crimes, in the other the pig he had saved from a minute's torment. And the beam tilted on the side of the pig.

Du côté du pourceau la balance pencha.

Note how all modern literature is pervaded by a pitiful yearning over suffering and sorrow. It would be easy to point out endless instances of this compassionate impulse in the arts of the last the few years, from Puvis de Chavannes' picture of *Le Pauvre Pêcheur*—The Poor Fisherman—to the latest productions of our young writers. The thing which charms us in Tolstoï and Dostoïewski, and initiated the mania for Russian literature, is this very thrill of human tenderness. This gush of pity, this breath of sympathy has little affinity with the vague and unpractical humanitarian feeling of the romantic school. It is a deeper emotion,

more philosophical and less fantastic, resting on a broader basis. The men into whom it has passed have a larger culture.

We see the same aspirations working no less in the women of the day. There is nothing surprising in seeing them moved to action by an impulse of mystical charity. Woman has in her power three kinds of good works : the works of Beauty, the works of Motherhood, the works of Charity; she may play the part of Aspasia, of Cornelia, or of Antigone. The Sister of Charity is an avatar of the perennial Antigone—the antithesis to Célimène in the scale of imperishable types of humanity.

A poet whom a melancholy fate compelled to spend many years in a hospital, has recorded the impression left on his mind by the light step of the nursing Sister.

> Strange how the quiet fall of women's feet
> Re-echoes in the suffering wretch's brain.

The Sister of Charity is a figure ever dear to the poet's fancy—the devoted woman softly moving about in white and grey, with a gentle hand to smooth the bed where pain lies moaning.

ÉMILE MICHELET.





MISERY'S WATCH

The *Primauguet* had weighed anchor after several hours' stop at the Azores. It was all but two years since the good ship, which bore the name of the famous Breton seaman, had begun her cruise, and she was now overdue two months at the French port to which she was bound. She had met with wild weather. At Cape Horn even those who were least afraid of death had thought themselves lost. Three of the crew had perished in the storm. But the voyage over, she was now on her way back to Brest.

Some miles from the Azores a squall again struck the *Primauguet*.

"A man overboard!" cried the boatswain.

"It's the topman Javréo," answered the first mate, "he has fallen from the yards."

A life-buoy was thrown, but there was such a heavy sea running that the sailor could not reach it. The engines were reversed and the life-boat gotten out.

And now, for one hour and three quarters has the topman been in the water. So wild is the squall that the boat cannot get to him and he feels that, good swimmer though he may be, his strength will not withstand the tempest. He looks up towards the sky, and he cannot see it because of the waves.

Lying on his back, he lets the sea have its will of him. Presently he will sink. For surely *Fate* is against him, and who can turn on *Fate?* And yet he will die, not as one despairing, but rather as an honest wrestler who owns himself beaten. Why is it, then, that suddenly a vague feeling of sadness takes hold of him?

His life's dream had not been out of all reason. The hopes upon which he had based his future were not extravagant. The sea and its constant dangers had not changed the gentle nature of his fatalism. The struggle against the elements had but nourished his submissiveness, as it were, to the will of God. His tender heart had never beat with false pride, neither had it rebelled within him.

Until he was eighteen years old he had lived by fishing between Perros and Ploumanac'h. How many times had he come face to face with danger in his little fishing boat! But the sea has no mercy, else Breton waters would have been less kind to Javréo. In true pity for an orphan the sea should have dashed his body, as it did those of its many victims, against the rocks of Sklerder. For him no one waited by the fireside when evening came; to none did his absence bring sorrow.

No, in his dreary life as a fisherman there had been nothing to trouble his simple soul, nothing to lead him to vain dreaming. Since the widow Javréo was dead, Alain had kept the hut at the foot of Perros where all those he loved had died.

His aunt Aurégan, who was innkeeper at Louannec, would have given him a home with her, but, like a lonely sea bird, he stayed on in his solitude. Not for all the world would he have exchanged this place,—sad though it was—where so often he had wept. Sometimes, coming home from fishing, he would find his bowl of soup on the table and a fire burning on the hearth : his cousin, Marivonic, had come, and, in passing, had made his hut tidy for him. And even now, in this supreme hour, he remembered that before she went to service, Marivonic had said farewell in the same voice as had his mother on her death-bed : "I shall see you no more, Alanic."

And her presentiment is about to be fulfilled. Now that it is too late, the sailor sees with surprise that life with her would have been less

wretched. That last *adieu* of Marivonic, choked with tears, again falls heavily upon his heart. Haunted with a regret, he realizes that the death which threatens him is not without its horror. A wave like a wet winding-sheet wraps itself about him, and he is whirled into the trough of the sea.

But the watery grave will have none of this victim. The waters a second time cast up the body of the topman, and again he rises to the surface. His hour has not yet come.

What a powerful vitality there must be in the human conscience that is not stifled in such a struggle! There must needs be heroism for a man to fight against the brute forces of nature with the obstinacy of Javréo. The roaring of the waters, like the sound of battle, at first roused all his energy. Now in the noise of the waves there is something ominous. He fancies that this wild, disordered sea gives forth cries like those of the hunted upon whom the beast of prey is about to fall. For the first time the immensity of space fills him with fear, and the chaos of the tempest seems to him fatal. In an agony he sees himself alone, destined to perish; all alone, and far from the few things which he has loved in this world.

A prayer escapes from his lips when he thinks of the two women who will wait for him at Louannec. And on a sudden, before him is the vision of a funeral. Men of simple minds sometimes have the gift of second-sight; to them the dying come to say a last farewell—— In that far village where Javréo's return is looked for, there is mourning to-day in the little inn. The mother of Marivonic lies on the bier. The young girl kneels close to the funeral tapers, but her eyes wander about the house and then to the door, as if there was some one who should have come to keep with her the vigil of the dead. The bell tolls in the parish and carries afar, through the neighbourhood, the news of death—— Across the wastes of water, louder than the tempest of the Azores, it sings in the ears of the topman. It needed but this to take all courage from him. He closes his eyes in the fulness of his despair.

This time there had indeed been an end, if the life-boat had not, suddenly, run against the sailor. At last his body, now almost lifeless, was

snatched from the waves. Alain did not come to his senses until many hours later, on the ship. At his side was the boatswain, Le Toiser, a man of Trégastel. Smiling, he said to Javréo : "I knew you would come out of it, Alanic. When you fell in the sea, I made the sign of the cross on my heart for you, and I watched to see if the blue and white flame, that gives warning of death, would rise from the sea to heaven. But I did not see your soul ascend."

On the coasts of Trégastel and Ploumanac'h storms are frequent. The people of those districts have close relations with death. When a fisherman does not come home after a squall, his neighbours wait until night, and if during the darkness the little blue and white flame does not thrice make the rounds of the house, then they know it is only that he has been detained; he will return.

For twenty months Marivonic had heard no news of her cousin. The time for which he shipped was over; he would, without doubt, have returned home as had others who had gone the same year, had not the sea kept him for ever, perhaps. During the nights she had spent at the pillow of her sick mother, she had often longed for a sign from him; but she had seen nothing, heard nothing of the absent man. Could it be that he was still alive and had forgotten her? There is nothing to console the lowly for a first deception.

When, one July day at noon, Javréo again climbed the hill of Louannec, the reapers were passing on the road; and they greeted the sailor as if he were a stranger. These good people, having nothing pleasant to tell, liked best to pretend not to recognize him. But he hurried on to the village, scarce knowing they had not given him welcome. He found the inn of the widow Aurégan closed; looking up he saw the bunch of mistletoe and ivy fading above the door. A woman who passed asked him : "Are you a stranger in these parts now? The aunt takes her last rest beneath the great yew-tree. My poor boy, you come too late. Marivonic has gone with her godmother, who is a sister of charity, to Saint-Brieuc or to Paris——"

Just then he heard the twelve strokes of noon, and the *Angelus* rang in the old tower of Saint-Yves. Not a door was open, not a soul was



on the village *place*. It seemed to Javréo as if his parish had just been forbidden to him, and that it was his destiny to follow Marivonic.

* * *

It is written in a book of proverbs : "Nothing is so slow to pass away as certain hours of a Paris night."

One evening in February, three young men were walking to and fro on a boulevard of the *Rive Gauche,* uncertain how exactly to spend their time. Only one was really at home in this students' quarter. The other two, it was clear, belonged to a different world socially, though they did not seem here to be altogether lost in a new land. "Take us to some students' haunt," they said to their friend who was himself a man of letters.

"Ah! the good old places have disappeared. Now there are only shops with coloured glass fronts. The new-fashioned and much-advertised *tavernes* have ruined our old inns, as a would-be symbolism will kill literature. Just fancy——"

The poet was about to dilate on the ideal inn, when he was stopped short in his improvisation. The three friends were swept out of the way by a stream of students who just then came from a public ball. For awhile they were amused at the coarse gaiety bursting out upon the boulevard at this late hour; the bizarre costumes of some of the women made them laugh. And then they went wandering on towards the open pieces of waste land, which, a few years ago, were still to be found at one end of the Luxembourg.

Presently their attention was called to a man who lay on the edge of the pavement between two heaps of rubbish. Some repairs were being made just here; a low tent had been raised for the workmen's tools; a fire of glaring hot coals warmed the night-watchman and threw fantastic reflections on his earth-smeared blouse. The noise of the students had roused him, and he swore at the late passers-by. He gave the crowd a confused glance, and then turned with indifference towards the three wanderers. For his part, the man of letters was in search of adventure. "That lonely creature attracts me," he said; "there is in his face some-

thing foreign, I hardly know what, which awakes all my sympathy. We'll find out in a minute whether he has not been a sailor".

And in a melancholy voice he began a song of the sea, slow as the chanting of seamen at their work :

"Un coup de vent vint-z-à monter ;
Il va nous falloir bouliner——"

He had scarce lifted up his voice, sad in this midnight hour as a cry of distress from the midst of the waves, when the man leaned his back against the rubbish, and looked up :

"Mon tra déri tra la la la
Mon tra déri tra la laire."

One might have thought that with the rhythm of the refrain his eyes were opened to some far away vision of a ship lost in the storm :

"Le marchepied-z-il a cassé :
Le matelot tomba-z-à l'eau——"

And now a memory shakes him to the very soul; uneasy, trembling, he listens to this story of the sea which he himself, perhaps, has sung many times. The songs of sorrow of other days are more tender and dearer in the land of exile. Their echo comes to him, sad and yet sweet!

"On n'retrouva que son chapeau.
Plaignez les pauvres matelots——"

The song is ended, but the vision has not yet vanished. The man, leaning against the dirt pile, moves his body backward and forward in time to the music of the well-loved ballad. Then, sad and troubled, he throws himself down on the rubbish. He runs his two hands through his long fair beard, and they hear him moaning to himself : "My poor Javréo, what dost thou here? why didst thou give up the old life of misery?"

And then the poet said : "Call him; he is one of the hundred thousand Bretons who have taken refuge in Paris during the last ten years, because at home they are without bread".

The workman drew near, and, bowing to the three strangers, asked : "*Ces messieurs,* they are from Brittany, perhaps?"

"We have not that honour," answered one of the young men with fine diplomatic courtesy.

"You thought so, my good man," added the poet, "because of my song. But it has gone round the world, this song of the *Marins de Groix*."

The watcher went back to the dirt heaps, his disappointment on his face. The three friends agreed : "Yes, he is strange, this man, he must have his history. We will see him again."

But they never saw him after this. The next day Javréo, without giving any reason, left the work on the boulevard. Ashamed of having unnecessarily revealed his origin to strangers, humiliated by his confession, the Breton hid himself in another corner of Paris.

In Passy he found a place in a hotel. His new occupation kept him four months.

Every day at the same hour he would come to the banks of the Seine, and from the heights near the little foot-bridge would linger to watch the boats going and coming, and the trains crossing the viaduct of Auteuil.

He rarely paused to look at the life of the great city that stretched along the river. Two monuments, however, attracted his attention : the Invalides and, there, away off on the very horizon, the towers of Notre-Dame. Neglected as a child, born into the world only to fight against wind and tide, the practice of religion had never been made very real to him ; deprived as he was of all he might have loved, he sometimes felt the need of God, and the great basilica of Paris reminded him of his little parish church. But he was a man in whom there had been developed one worship only—a man wholly devoted to the love of his native land, and piety could influence him only as did everything else that held him to the past. And so it was with the sentiment that made him turn towards the Invalides ; he shared at least some of the memories that clustered about the glittering dome ; but this was as far as his patriotism carried him.

For the rest, he had bravely paid his debt to his country. He had served, in the campaign of 1870, on the gunboats of the Seine. He

had been simply doing his duty, and so the fatal war had left no traces on his soul. By such a nature the most brilliant action on the field was accepted as an every-day affair. It was rather the least heroic episodes of that terrible siege which he now remembered;—one or two personal reminiscences in which, perhaps, his countrymen figured,—sailors from his dear Breton coast, names which history would not dream of recording.

Thus one day Javréo was alone on guard on the boat between Grenelle and Auteuil. Commander Rosmore coming, asks what has become of the *brigadier* Derliec and the three other gunners. Javréo is embarrassed. He knows that his comrades are in the inn of the Grenelle bridge. The double meaning that the peasants of Tréguier give to the word *chapelle* suddenly occurs to him. "They have gone a minute to the church close by," is his reply.

Rather surprised at this naive answer, the Commander looks severely at Javréo. The young sailor bears the scrutiny with the same ingenuousness. And Commander Rosmore goes away murmuring: "Yes, they go to mass, these Bretons; but they are good at fighting—— You will say to the *brigadier* that in an hour we will have other beads to tell on the bridge of Sèvres."

The gunboats of the Seine were often followed by poor creatures dying of hunger, to whom, the engagement over, were thrown the rations of the dead. Javréo made a sign to an old woman crouching on the river bank; she ran to the Grenelle bridge; the men of the gunboat were not caught.

And this was about all that Javréo had to tell himself of Paris and the siege when, in the white coat of a hotel waiter, he came to see from which quarter the wind was blowing above the Seine. He had never looked beyond the mere accomplishment of duty, for with him it was as if his moral being had not yet been developed. As the pilgrim, towards evening, wearying of the way, turns to the sun low on the horizon; so Javréo had need every day, towards sunset, to come and consult the heavens. Even with the regret that was never stilled, he had brought from Brittany a secret hope. To the man whose heart keeps its piety and faith, it

seems as if in hours of sadness, he listened to the divine voice which never deceives. And thus the name of Marivonic, like a mystic summons, rang ceaselessly in the ears of Javréo : *Fate* would then bring them once more together even in this world.

How many times did the sailor of Perros tremble when, by her cap, he recognized a woman of Tréguier! Fooled by his own hopes, he had, from afar, mistaken more than one stranger to be the gentle friend of his childhood. And even these mistakes were a joy, since they brought him, for a short moment at least, the shadow of happiness.

One day some one told Javréo that Marivonic was in Paris; she was nursing the sick in a convent, Rue de Vaugirard. That same evening, in his sailor clothes, he knocked at the door of the sisters' hospital. To his questions they answered that Marivonic Aurégan had been a servant in the house; only yesterday, however, she had gone. She had learned that her cousin Javréo, whom she thought dead, had returned and, once the news was received, she had set out on the road to Brittany.

That very day, Alain took the 5.50 train from the station of Montparnasse.

* * *

It is a lovely evening in June! After a day of tropical heat, there has sprung up a breath of air, still warm, which presently will quicken into a breeze. Across the pale blue of the sky, the clouds have not yet begun their evening flight; they will not meet there above until the moment when the setting sun sinks below the horizon.

The last houses of Paris disappear one by one as the train flies past. To the right, one can see the heights of Passy and of Auteuil, like two distinct towns on the brow of the hill, and further, Mont-Valérien, hidden in mist. And then woods on all sides, country houses; beyond again are the shores of the Seine, a little town in a valley, more woods, and next, Versailles. There is a constant going and coming in the train; many travellers get out, and others come and take their places in the carriage with Javréo.

A near compartment is occupied by a workman, an elderly woman sitting opposite, and a young girl. Before long they are talking together in *Bas-Breton.* They are going home to their native village. The woman comes from Cavan, a small hamlet near Lannion. If she left the parish, it has only been for her own misery. Her daughter and her son-in-law had persuaded her to come to Paris some nine or ten months ago. Within the fortnight after her arrival, husband and wife both died, leaving this little one, but ten years old, whom the grandmother is now taking with her to Brittany.

It is true she is returning without a penny in her pocket, and indeed it was only after long days of begging and after a thousand efforts that she at last succeeded in getting a free railway ticket from some public charity. But once she is there again, there will be no more worries; the parish will look after the child; and as to the grandmother, despite her years, she will find work to do in twenty farms or more; why from Lannion to Prat, there is no one to whom she is a stranger. She was lost and despairing in that great sea of Paris. What happiness, then, on the morrow to once more set foot upon Belle-Isle-Bégard!

But the memory of her dead mingles with the longing for her Promised Land. There is an expression of regret, as well as bitter joy on the withered face under the cap which is growing so yellow and is held in place by a bit of cord, and many eyes are wet as they look from the old peasant to the child, who, with one hand, holds on to her grandmother, and with the other clutches her supper of dry bread.

In the other parts of the carriage, there is gay and noisy talk. Two soldiers rise, calling to the topman : "Hallo, sailor! bound for your ship at Brest?"

Javréo answers only by a sign, and the soldiers go back to their places on the wooden seat.

And now it is twilight. A blue light spreads over the meadows and across the plain, ripe with the harvest. Labourers here and there are walking towards the farm-houses, their scythes over their shoulders. The air is heavy-laden with the scents from fields and gardens. It is the uncertain hour when the summer day, drawn to a close, leaves behind



it a hope or a delicious memory of happiness and touches the heart with a new tenderness.

The train stops in an out-of-the-way corner of the Beauce. Behind the station, a clock-tower rises from the pretty parish church and is topped with a spire, as are almost all the belfries of Brittany. Around the church there is a little wood, probably enclosing the grave-yard, and its sombre depths fill the place with melancholy. Suddenly the bell rings the nine strokes of the *Angelus :* and then lighter, more joyous and piercing chimes announce that the day is done. Children are at play on the village *place* and their cries are heard in the chiming.

Beyond, again, there is the monotony of the fields. On the very horizon, the last rays of the sun still redden the gathering shadows of twilight. All nature waits, as it were, in that strange interval of silent expectation that comes before the falling of the night.

Since he left Paris, Javréo has never taken his eyes from the fiery glow of the sunset; to-morrow he will watch it fade over the sea of Perros. Presently he rises swiftly and leans his head far out of the window. There, on the road that runs by the railway, a woman sits by a mile-stone, a peasant from Tréguier, a poor creature who is brave enough to make the journey home on foot; perhaps, like the sweetheart he is seeking, she started yesterday from Paris; instinctively the sailor is drawn to this wanderer so many leagues from their native land. The train passes; the woman rises and goes on her way, looking , partly in farewell, partly with hope, towards the travellers who will arrive before her at her journey's end. But a wild cry comes to her; was it not her name she heard? Marivonic! Marie-Yvonne Aurégan!

She sees a sailor waving his arms; in her wonder, she answers, Alain! Alanic!

And then the door of the carriage opens, and the topman flings himself into space. There is a murmur of horror throughout the train, which flies past, hurrying ever onwards.

One minute the young girl stands there, in a deadly stupor. And then quickly she runs to the embankment. Javréo has not moved from the side of the railroad where he has fallen. She throws herself upon

his lifeless body; both legs have been broken in the fall. He does not even groan, but when he feels the arms of Marivonic about him, he looks up to her with a sad smile; "Was it not madness?" he says, "I fancied myself on deck and I thought I was throwing myself into the sea"

But the girl cannot answer. She looks far and wide to see if there is no shelter, no human help to be had in this solitude.

"It was the joy of seeing you again," he goes on, "that carried me away. I wanted at last to get the better of *Fate* which has kept us apart."

She leans over the wounded man and kisses his pallid brow. It is her first, and yet her betrothal kiss. Again he speaks: "I fear it is all over with me, my sweetheart. But at least take your poor Alanic back with you to Brittany."

The first stars are lighting up the heavens. The doctors who come to him declare his legs must be amputated. But he will not hear of it; and the next train carries him away with Marivonic.

All that solemn night Marivonic watches. With hands clasped, the sorrowing lovers restrain their tears and even their words. Towards morning, when they are told they have come into Brittany, the topman seems to regain his strength; and then a fever seizes him with pitiless violence.

He is carried from the train at Guingamp. When he sees himself again on his native soil, a strange light comes into his eyes; he presses Marivonic wildly to his heart. Before he is taken from the station, he is dead.

Their longings are stilled. They are re-united, and for ever.

* * *

She took Alanic, according to his last wish, to Louannec. His body was borne upon a bier by two horses along the old road from Guingamp to the shores of Perros. As the funeral went by, the bells tolled in every belfry; and the priest, opening his doors to this Christian who

had died away from his parish, gave the last absolution and said the prayer for *strangers.*

When the horses' bells warned the people of Louannec that the funeral was about to pass, the men of the village came and walked before it. Six sailors carried the bier and they laid the topman, Javréo, to rest beneath the turf; the young girls gathered round his betrothed.

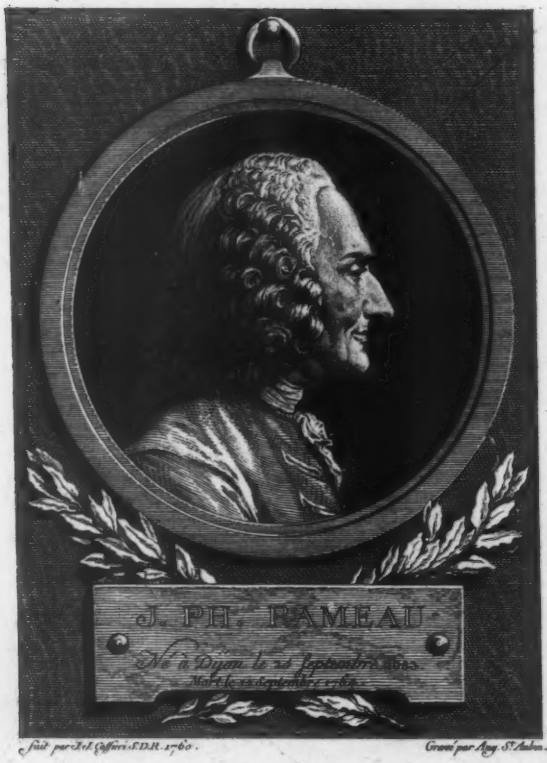
Sorrow did not kill Marivonic Aurégan. They say she goes every morning to the shore and sweeps and cleans the hut of her cousin Alanic, as she used to do in the years gone by. But after that, she comes back to the old inn, and all day long she waits at the threshold for one who never comes. She speaks to nobody; she is never seen to weep; but as she passes, the people whisper to each other that the poor girl has lost her mind.

N. QUELLIEN.



THE OPERA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION (*)

UNDER THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV.



What a crowd there was at the Opera on a Friday, the day recognized as society's, especially when some young bride was to appear there in full pomp, decked as richly as might be and covered with diamonds! So etiquette demanded, for people of quality at least : the day preferred for this ceremony, which had to take place within a week after marriage, was Friday; the bride came *en grande loge*—to use the orthodox phrase—and bowed to the public who responded to the gracious curtsy with prolonged applause; it was a kind of solemn presentation of the fair lady, hitherto confined to her convent, far from the world and from the vulgar gaze. In order to give more brilliance to this entry into society, the leading artists were now and then begged to lend it the support of their presence,

(*) See *Art and Letters* for August, 1888, Vol. III, page 128.

their good offices being requited at a high figure. Thus Samuel Bernard handed Mademoiselle Lemaure a thousand livres in acknowledgment of her having consented to resume the part of Délie in the *Fêtes Grecques et Romaines,* the day his grand-daughter, Mademoiselle Bernard, who had become Duchess de Mirepoix at twelve years and a half, made this formal "coming out." He was, as far as that goes, used to such acts of liberality and gave no less than a hundred louis to Mademoiselle Sallé for having danced nicely at the wedding of his daughter with President Molé, before the table at which his guests were seated.

This choice of Friday as the fashionable day was of as old date as the Opera itself. At this period, and up to the end of the last century, the names of the singers did not appear in the bills, and the public, on taking their places, had to risk whether they heard the leading performers or their doubles, and that without any appeal being open; only by a sort of tacit convention, it was understood that the principal artists should appear, for choice, at the Opera on Fridays, while the Sunday and Tuesday performances, as well as the supplementary one on Thursdays during the winter season, should be more or less left to chance. What is more, at the very beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Opera boasted but one double-bass, intended to support the choruses, this colossal instrument only resounded on Fridays—probably for fear of wearing it out. "At the Opera they are performing *Callirhoé,* which is not scoring a success," wrote Mademoiselle Aissé in 1730; "but the modish thing is only to go to the Opera on Fridays."

Samuel Bernard acted chiefly from worldly ostentation; he had no marked leaning for musical artists. M. de la Popelinière, on the other hand, was mightily smitten with them; he was never happy out of their society and entertained them lavishly in his mansion at Passy, a meeting-place for all the wits, where excellent concerts were given without regard to expense.

It was La Popelinière who, much to his credit in the eyes of posterity, constituted himself the protector of Rameau, he it was who, struck by the rare merits of that great musician, who was himself unfit to beg a libretto, assigned him quarters in his house, introduced him to the brilliant company

that met there, and made a point of at length procuring for him the precious libretto he was in search of. He was not successful at the outset, for the established literary purveyors to the Opera were unwilling to entrust one of their precious manuscripts to a composer verging on fifty, who had his first public appearance still to make. Voltaire, however, at the instance of the financier, had written a *Samson* which Rameau promptly set to music and whose performance was prevented, through hatred of Voltaire, by the religious party; ultimately after innumerable manœuvres and mishaps, La Popelinière induced the Abbé Pellegrin to turn Racine's *Phèdre* into an opera and to entrust it to Rameau. But Pellegrin, who did not mean to throw his work away and had no doubts about its excellence, wanted to guarantee himself against the risk of this unknown composer's music compromising the success of so fine a poem, and would only hand it over in exchange for a note of hand for fifty pistoles : the musician consented, signed the note, and set to work without delay. And as soon as he had finished, La Popelinière arranged for a trial-performance of the work at his house, in the course of which Pellegrin, suddenly jumping up in excitement, tore up the note signed by Rameau, with the words : "Sir, when people write music like yours, there is no need for any guarantee!"

This opera of *Hippolyte et Aricie,* somewhat scurvily greeted by the public at the outset, in 1733, and arriving but tardily at success, raised a storm of criticisms, gibes, and squibs against Rameau. This little war of epigrams lasted no less than four years, until the production of *Castor et Pollux,* the prodigious success of which completed the victory of the Ramist party : then, Rameau went on in triumph, universally applauded, while his music, more tuneful and freer from superabundant flourishes, wrought a benign influence on the taste of the time in singing, and singers gradually adapted their style to the new forms that success had consecrated.

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It was in the full tide of their career that Rameau had found Mademoiselle Lemaure and Chassé, Seigneur of Chinais, a scion of Breton

nobility, and an ex-body-guard, whose father, a notary at Rennes, had been ruined by Law's scheme. A mediocre singer but an excellent actor, of a good stage presence and endowed with a superb deep voice, this young officer turned opera singer, without loss of caste, thanks to the letters-patent obtained from Louis XIV by the Abbé Perrin, had, through these countless advantages, been able to outshine all his predecessors among the baritones and the triumphantly superior, incomparable fashion in which he had performed the part of Roland had gained for him an incontestable position in the front rank.

An accomplished gentleman, an impassioned singer who thoroughly entered into the spirit of his part, Chassé was as successful in society as on the stage. "It is a triumph for Chassé," says Mademoiselle Aissé speaking of *Pyrame et Thisbé,* "he is a real actor in this opera; his part is a very fine one, his compass includes two whole octaves. The Antier is madly in love with him." One day two ladies, a Frenchwoman and a Pole, fought sword in hand for his affection. The Frenchwoman was somewhat seriously wounded, but her rival was unable to enjoy her victory, for she was at once conducted to the frontier in accordance with orders from the authorities. As for the singer, he deemed it necessary after this affair to break off his engagement at the theatre and to stay at home so as to receive, in a languid pose, the visits of his friends. The King commissioned the Duke de Richelieu to bid him bring this pleasantry to an end. "Tell his Majesty," answered the singer, "that it is not my fault, but that of Providence for making me the most amiable man in the kingdom." "I will have you to know, you puppy," rejoined Richelieu, "that you only come third : after the King, comes myself."

But alongside the Lemaure and Chassé, alongside Mademoiselle Antier, who was drawing near the end of her career, and Mademoiselle Petitpas, destined to die in early youth, the opera had just witnessed the first appearance of different artists who were especially brilliant in Rameau's charming opera-ballets : Jéliotte in the first place, then Mesdemoiselles Fel and Chevalier. How delightful it was to hear Jéliotte and Mademoiselle Fel together, up to the very end of their career! "They have been

playing for the past twenty-six performances," writes Barbier in 1753, "an opera of a certain Sieur de Mondonville named *Titon et l'Aurore*, which is much applauded, especially for the singing of Jéliotte and Mademoiselle Fel. The whole place is full at four o'clock, as at the first performance." What success of every kind and in all quarters for the charming tenor, always in good humour, simple, obliging and kind, well able to keep his place among the greatest, welcomed, courted on all sides; what a flutter in the boxes as soon as he came on the stage, what agitation in every female breast, what tender looks, what passionate applause! Merely by his full, round, harmonious voice, silvery in tone as it was, and attaining to the top notes with the utmost ease, Jéliotte would have justified these transports; but if the men were willing to allow him talent and sense, the women admired the whole personality of the artist and could see naught but wonders in him.

This charming fellow seldom found a fair lady obdurate, and it was out of pure caprice or fastidiousness if any one chose to resist him for any time, as did at first Mademoiselle Chevalier. When still bashful and a novice, he sighed tenderly for her, until one day Sophie Arnould said to him in friendly confidence : "Have done with languishing! If you want to succeed, pay court to a Duchess." And the advice was wise, as Jéliotte soon found, on seeing the Chevalier fall into his arms. A court lady creeps in one evening behind the scenes, in spite of the guard, and fancying herself well hidden under her cloak, feverishly waits in a corner for the chance of seeing and accosting the favourite actor. But Sophie Arnould detects her and approaches her with an ironically profound bow : "For whom is your Grace looking? For a French guard? We have forty of them, and your Grace has only to choose. For Jéliotte? We have only one, Madame, and cannot do without him. Besides he is already engaged. Jéliotte does not go to Court, his line is finance."

This bit of raillery covered a truth. Jéliotte was then in the good graces of Madame de Jully, the sister-in-law of Madame d'Épinay, who was at first in the secret of this intimacy and was subsequently entrusted with the task of breaking it off. "One thing astonishes me, and I can't make it out at all," she says in her Memoirs, without which nothing



would have leaked out about this pretty love affair. "Jéliotte, the famous opera singer, has taken up his quarters at Madame de Jully's, during the past winter; he has an amount of style and ease to which I can't get used. I know there are plenty of good houses in which he is received; but the thing has still an air of novelty for me, and when he loses twenty louis at *brelan,* I am surprised people take them. His society is really very agreeable; he talks well, has fine manners without any touch of the fatuous, only his style is above his station. I am persuaded he would induce people to forget it, were he not forced to advertise it three times a week." One fine day, Madame de Jully, weary of the singer, begs her sister-in-law to rid her of him, and what does the obliging Madame d'Épinay proceed to do? "Yesterday morning," she once more notes in her journal, "I saw Jéliotte, and from what he told me, I am inclined, on the whole, to think that Madame de Jully has not behaved to him in a way to estrange him from her. I did what I could to prepare him for his ill-fortune, but he would take no hint. I reported to Madame de Jully, the same evening, the indifferent success of the negotiation." Then the latter, to dismiss the persistent adorer, used the simplest of all means; she shut the door in his face.

Whilst the seductive singer was levying contributions from citizens' and financiers' dames, from ladies of the nobility and the law, his comrade Marie Fel, who had come out only one year after him, in 1734, and whose delicate health exacted the most careful attention, attracted every eye by her pretty face, and received the constant homage of the greatest personages, even of a sovereign. Without having led a very dissolute life—her permanent intimacy with the painter Latour, is a proof of this—she was by no means inexorable and had passed at one time for the mistress of the Duke de Rochechouart. Casanova, at the time of his visit to Paris, was taken to her house by his friend Patu, and as he was looking with interest at three young children who were the joy of the house : "I adore them," said the songstress.

"They deserve it for their beauty's sake," politely replied the visitor, "though each one has a different expression."

"I should think so! The eldest is the Duke of Annecy's; the second

the Count d'Egmont's, and the youngest is the child of Maisonrouge, who has just married my comrade Romainville."

"Ah! pardon me, I beg, I thought you were the mother of all three."


Année 1751
a 1752.

Pain vin et Chaussures
Mlle Fel 300

J'ay reçeu de Monsieur De Neuville
Caissier de l'academie Royale de musique
La somme de Trois cens Livres pour Pain
vin et Entretien de Chaussures à moy accordée
pendant l'année échüe à Pâques dernier ---
mil sept cent cinquante deux, dont quittance
a Paris Le Mil sept cent
cinquante deux
Pour ayant fait Fel

Formal receipt for additional salary, known also under the name of *Feux* (1).

"You were not mistaken. I am!" answered Fel, exchanging smiles with Patu.

(1) The King's singers and musicians received, in addition to their salaries, bread, wine and victuals at the six great feasts of the year. The bread and wine, paid at first in kind, were compounded for in 1700 and paid in money, and this sum was soon transformed into a supplementary salary, then into a fee proportionate to the services rendered by each artist. Mademoiselle Fel, joining the Opera in November, 1734, at a salary of 400 *livres*, drew 800 *livres* at the end of two years, then 2,000 in 1740, plus 100 *livres* for bread and wine, which latter sum was raised to 400 *livres* in 1749.

This ill-informed visitor was doubtless ignorant also of the story of the Romainville, to whom Mademoiselle Fel had alluded. This young person, who was of good origin and really named Rotisset, had succeeded in coming out at the Academy of Music, without the knowledge of her parents, who, as soon as they heard of it, petitioned the King to have the engagement entered upon by their daughter broken, and the girl removed from the Opera. But the latter desired to stay there and keep her freedom; she was supported, and that powerfully, by M. d'Argenson, to whom her brother was private secretary, and neither the King, to whom M. de Maurepas presented the petition, nor the Queen, nor the Duke d'Orléans would lend an ear to the request of these luckless parents. Thereupon the younger Rotisset, as annoyed as the others were at the scandal caused by his sister, but of a practical mind before everything, exerted himself to obtain a good post for his father, as a set-off : it was just as well to take advantage of what couldn't be helped.

After having had gallants innumerable, after having been, as Barbier says, *dans le libertinage public,* the Romainville had cast her net over the son of a rich farmer-general, Masson de Maisonrouge, receiver-general of finance at Amiens, where he scarcely ever resided, and a great friend of all the ladies of the Opera. This somewhat thick-headed, not to say bovine, personage had loaded this not over young nor over pretty singer with presents and diamonds; he had bought a mansion for her that cost a hundred and fifty thousand *livres,* then, his wife being dead, he had married the damsel at the end of two months. All his family were shocked, and the other receivers-general would have liked to make him resign his post, but the steps they had taken to move the controller-general in this direction had failed miserably : the dear brother was always by to watch over his sister's interests from his snug corner in d'Argenson's cabinet.

But to return to Marie Fel. After having granted the prayers of a fairish number of adorers, among whom was Louis de Cahusac, the dramatist, she suddenly adopted the severe tone of a prude. "She is a true Penelope," thereupon said Sophie Arnould, "she undoes by night what she does by day." The most illustrious victim of her unlooked-

for rigour, a sham victim it is true, was Baron Frederick Melchior de Grimm, representative of the free town of Frankfort at the Court of France, and a philosopher, to boot. Romantic, excitable, sentimental, he had already experienced for a German princess a deep and mysterious passion that had all but brought him to the point of suicide, as he used himself to affirm with the utmost seriousness. After having known the singer for some time on terms of ordinary friendship, Grimm suddenly took it into his head to fall desperately in love with her and to try and supplant Cahusac. The fair lady persisting in remaining constant to the latter, he lost all taste for food or drink and prepared himself to die of love; he passed his nights and days in perpetual lethargy, his eyes wide open, his pulse quite steady, but without speaking, eating or moving, as still as though he were dead. This singular malady lasted some days, then when he saw the "cruel object of his flame" leaving him to die without consolation, all of a sudden he rose, resumed his ordinary course of life, and never again mentioned this strange prostration to any one.

* * *

From the earliest days of the Opera, it was customary to exhibit it as a wonder to the Ambassadors from outlandish parts who visited France from time to time; they looked with eyes wide open at the magnificence of the sight, without in the least understanding what they were seeing; but people were none the less careful to take them to the Opera in state, under plea of paying them honour, for the reason that their presence excited public curiosity and was the excuse for a rise in the price of places. The most famous of these Embassies came from Siam and was the wonder of the Parisians at the end of 1686. The Ambassador was taken to the Opera one evening that they were playing *Armide,* and had the whole piece told him, its every detail explained. Seeing the enchantments Armida had recourse to, to gain Rinaldo's heart, he enquired if she was a Frenchwoman; and when they answered no, that she was the niece of Hidrast, King of Damascus : "Just so," he replied, "if she had been a Frenchwoman, she would have had no need of magic to get herself beloved; for Frenchwomen have charms enough in themselves."

An engraving that is as old as Louis XIV's time—the engraver's name, Trouvain, is sufficient proof of that—has preserved for us the record of a visit paid by Ambassadors from Morocco to the Academy of Music (1) : it was apparently the Embassy which the Emperor Muley-Ismael sent to the *Grand Roi* to treat for peace and which arrived in the capital in February,



1699. At its head was Admiral Abdalla-ben-Aoscha; he went to the Opera with his suite to see the *Carnaval de Venise,* and at the end of the evening said to M. Petit de la Croix, the interpreter in attendance :

(1) The engraving which represents the Ambassadors of Morocco at the Opera is the sole document, really alive and lively, that has come down to us respecting the Opera-house and audience in the seventeenth century and even in the eighteenth, before the engravings of Moreau. This document, rare as it is, is all the more precious from its giving with precision the arrangement of the boxes with their upright partitions, pierced with a kind of window which permitted the spectators in the adjoining boxes to see the performance slantwise.

"This spectacle is a truly royal one, and the King is the same in his diversions and pleasures as in serious affairs." What models of gallantry and urbanity were this Siamese and this Moor; what a fine style they had acquired!

In the early years of the following century, it was the turn of the Turkish Ambassadors whom the Grand Signior sent to the young King Louis XV to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, and who were received with all the more attention from the fact that the Sultan's own son, they said, was included in the party, giving himself out as the son of the chief Ambassador. On Thursday, the 27th of March, 1721, five days after the state reception at the Tuileries, Mehemed-Effendi-Telferdor and his escort went to see *Thésée* played; the chiefs were placed in the amphitheatre, in sight of the whole house, and in an interval between the acts, they were served with refreshments. They made signs, it appears, of being enchanted with their evening; they were certainly not more so than Francine the manager, who had taken advantage of this windfall to make a tremendous rise in his prices : a place in the pit cost five *livres,* a box on the first tier cost a hundred.

On the 16th of May, 1743, envoys from the Bey of Tunis were present at the performance; the house was crowded, and the foreigners were welcomed with hearty applause; thereupon, in response to this civility, they caused musk to be burnt in their box, to such an extent that they poisoned the atmosphere of the whole house.

Some time afterwards there was another ceremony, but one that was not rare at the Opera and in which a sufficiently mediocre songstress, the niece of Mademoiselle Antier, had only to bear in mind the example of her aunt to put herself in evidence. She played Glory in the Prologue to *Armide,* the day that Marshal de Saxe came for the first time to the theatre after the victory of Fontenoy, and just as Mademoiselle Antier, in the same character, had crowned Villars after Denain, so Mademoiselle de Metz, taking advantage of the Marshal's having taken a seat in one of the balconies, approached him and gallantly offered him a laurel crown which he at first declined, but which the Duke de Biron, Colonel of the Guards, forced him to accept by thrusting it over his arm.

The young and pretty songstress to whom this part had been, as a favour, allotted, made much profit out of it, for the Marshal sent her, on the same day, a pair of ear-rings worth eight or ten thousand *livres;* but if the Abbé de la Porte is to be believed, he made her pay dearly for them. Less than four years afterwards, mourning took the place of joy on the Opera stage; the hero of Fontenoy lay dead, and a certain chorus-singer, the fascinating, fair-haired Jeanne Lefebvre, called Desaigles, a soft and dainty little person who had succeeded in holding the mighty captain fast for some time, thought fit to wear mourning for the hero on the stage itself. For twenty-eight days, the period of full mourning, she made the graceful addition to her costume of a black veil or ribbon; after which she ingeniously contrived a half-mourning as graceful as the other, which lasted forty-eight days all told. And these two periods, strictly observed, corresponded, if we are to believe Chevrier, to very minute details of her amours with the conqueror of Lawfeld.

The Academy of Music, at the time of the brilliant period of Rameau, was under the direction of Thuret, an ex-captain of the Picardy regiment, who sacrificed his health in it rather than his fortune, and who, among other profitable ideas, hit upon that of charging a commission to damsels desirous of figuring on the stage : an excellent example that Monnet, the manager of the Opéra-Comique, made haste to follow.

The Academy of Music was, in point of fact, an asylum for maids, wives, or widows who wanted to escape from paternal authority and defy the protests of their family : such had been the decision of His Gracious Majesty. It sufficed them to get entered on the list of the *filles du magasin,* that is to say among the music and dancing pupils who, not having finished their studies, appeared on the stage before being formally engaged, and these entries, entirely arbitrary and unconditional as they were, required no other justification than the wish of the applicant herself, from whom no one demanded either means, or talent, or probability of her ever shewing any in the future. Once provided with this warrant, each girl or woman, however young she might be, however wanting in talent, was no longer dependent on any one : she was wholly free to lead whatever life she chose.

The great nobles, the Duke de Richelieu in particular, often employed this convenient means, a means infinitely preferable to abduction by fraud or violence, to which recourse was only had in cases of absolute necessity. In the night between the 10th and 11th of May, 1728, the Count de Melun carried off Mademoiselle de Camargo, together with her young sister Sophie, and kept them prisoners for several days in his mansion in the Rue de la Couture-Saint-Gervais. The father of the two girls addressed a petition to Cardinal de Fleury, the Premier, demanding that the Count should marry his eldest daughter and settle a dowry on the younger; but the ravisher, it is hardly necessary to say, did neither the one thing nor the other, and all that happened was the setting at liberty of the two sisters who made no further complaint of their treatment.

It was the same with the Rotisset damsel running away from her parents, the same, too, with the woman Pitrot running away from her husband. The latter was a dancer, Louise Régis, called Rey, the daughter of an ex-dancer who had joined the Opera at a very early age; after six years of probation she had become *première danseuse* at the Comédie-Française, then had eloped with the ballet-master Pitrot, and had gone off with him to Warsaw, where she had married him. Three years later, they returned to Paris and joined the Comédie-Italienne together; but the lady having had enough of matrimony, one fine day abandoned the conjugal roof and laid hands on everything she could carry off in the way of valuables, jewels, and clothes. A marriage solemnized in Poland, she affirmed, was no marriage at all, and, not being married, she had the right to take herself off and all that was hers. But at the same time, as a measure of prudence, she made haste to return to the Academy of Music, and well for her that she did so, for the Parliament declared her marriage binding and forced her to return to her husband : a judgment, as far as that goes, of no effect, for her enrolment in the lists of the Opera made her free and permitted her to seek new adventures, unhindered.

Often too, by an odd turn, the Opera served as an asylum for persecuted daughters or unhappy wives who preferred the stage to the cloister, and who took refuge there to avoid being any longer taken advantage of or maltreated. Such will be, a good deal later on, the case of



the girl Faure begging to be inscribed on the registers of the Opera, to escape from the cruelty of her father and of a woman who attempted to make shameful gains out of her; such, more especially, will be the case of Sophie Arnould's daughter, Madame de Murville, applying to be engaged so as to be separated from a husband who beat, ruined, and insulted her. But, towards the close of the century, there will be much more scrupulousness about employing this curious right, established by usage, it is true, but never sanctioned by any official decree. It was not without regret that Louis XVI saw the continuance of this abuse, and the worthy Dauvergne, manager at the time, will answer : "that many women have applied for admission to the Opera since Easter, without any other reasons than Madame de Murville's, and that they have been refused because the Academy cannot lend itself, as was formerly the usage, to expedients calculated to bring discredit on it without any compensating advantage; by reason, however, of the applicant being the daughter of the celebrated Sophie Arnould, they will see if she can be taken in—if she has a trifle of voice and talent." Despite the regrets of the King, despite the scruples of Dauvergne, whittling down a privilege like this to the smallest proportions, nothing short of a revolution will suffice to destroy the scandalous immunity of the *filles du magasin*.

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On the 6th of April, 1763, about eleven o'clock in the morning, a fierce fire broke out on the stage of the Opera. As it was then the Easter-tide recess, there was no one in the theatre, not even the porters who were supposed never to leave it, and the fire quickly grew to considerable proportions; it rapidly gained the whole building, which was destroyed in less than two hours. The flames attacked the wing of the Palais-Royal that adjoined the theatre, got as far as the clock in the court-yard, and almost up to the chief entrance, in the Rue Saint-Honoré. The first care was to remove the archives and to save the magnificent pictures in the palace—— The whole theatre fell in; the fire was not mastered till nearly six o'clock in the evening, and then thanks to the bravery of the Cordeliers, Capuchins and Franciscans, who

had been the first to rush to the scene of the disaster, in accordance with the rule of those orders. Two among their number perished, and Favart records their death with touching philosophy : "Fifteen persons are said to have perished in this frightful disaster; this is not true; we have got off with the loss of one Franciscan and one Capuchin."

As a matter of fact, this house was so inconvenient that people were glad to find it destroyed. "It became, very luckily for the world of talent and the arts, a prey to the flames," says Noverre. There was a perfect hailstorm of jokes. There had been a dearth of water at the critical moment (one of the things that never change). "It is very simple," says one, "how could it be anticipated that an ice-house would catch fire?" Voltaire wrote to d'Argental on the 9th of April : "You have nothing to say, my dears, about the burning of the Opera, it is the hand of God; they say the performance was so bad that sooner or later the Divine vengeance was bound to burst forth."

This catastrophe delayed the arrival of Gluck in France. Favart, who was then expecting the great musician in Paris, in accordance with an announcement from the Count de Durazzo, received in July a letter from Vienna in which his friend Dancourt, the actor, told him : "You will not see the Chevalier Gluck, he has returned here. He was getting into his post-chaise at Boulogne, to start for Paris, when he received a letter from the Count, summoning him back to Vienna, because he had learnt of the burning down of the Opera, so that the Chevalier's journey seemed to him useless." Everything had been done, however, to prevent the performances being interrupted, the King having decided that salaries and pensions should be paid during this enforced recess. Soufflot, the architect of the Pantheon, quickly ran up a temporary building in the Tuileries, on the site of the old "Théâtre des Machines," which had formerly served for the production of *Ercole Amante*, of the *Psyché* of Molière, Quinault, Corneille and Lulli, and which had subsequently been lent to Servandoni as a house for his big mechanical spectacular performances. Now this was so vast a space that Soufflot was able to construct his auditorium and stage on the site of the stage only of the Machines, the hall of the latter being retained and kept separate from the Opera by

a temporary wall : the building expenses, at first estimated at 250,000 *livres,* amounted to 409,555.

The opening took place on the 5th of January, 1764, with a lavishly mounted revival of Rameau's masterpiece, *Castor et Pollux*, at which the master, then ninety years old, was able to be present a few months before his death. So great was the vogue of these performances that every seat was taken in advance for several weeks. Although this house reproduced exactly the arrangement of the one in the Palais-Royal (they had purposely kept the number of boxes the same, so as to avoid any difficulty with the subscribers), though with a greater height for each tier, grave fault was found with it : the pit was too high, the boxes thrust too far forward, etc. During the annual closing, divers changes were made, without much resulting improvement, or bettering the acoustic properties of the place. "This house is very dead to sound," said a spectator. "Lucky house!" rejoined the Abbé Galiani.

The Opera remained in the Tuileries six years. Almost immediately after the fire of 1763, Moreau, the civic architect and clerk of the works, had been instructed to prepare plans for a new house : it was necessary, before everything, to come to some understanding with the Duke d'Orléans whose palace had sustained serious damage from the fire. A decree of the Council of State had declared the City responsible for a fire arising, it was said, from the negligence of workpeople employed at the theatre during Holy Week; but the City brought about a compromise. The Duke d'Orléans got a decision that the Opera should be rebuilt on the old site, at the expense of the municipality "supplemented by whatever help the King should be pleased to accord;" but to give still greater extent to the new house it was decided to take in, besides the space occupied by the blind-alley and by several buildings in the Palais-Royal, the seven houses which separated the alley from the Rue des Bons-Enfants. The Prince paid for four of these, and the City contributed the three others, which it had acquired in 1750 to be used as offices in connection with the Opera; in consideration of which, it was discharged from all liability for the damage caused by the fire in the Palais-Royal. But these conditions once agreed on, Moreau was not clear of his difficulties. At the

L'ACADEMIE ROYALE
DE MUSIQUE

DONNERA aujourd'hui Mardi 26 Janvier 1779,

CASTOR ET POLLUX,

Tragédie en cinq Actes.

ARCHIVES DE L'OPÉRA

Jeudi 28, la troiſieme Repréſentation de

IL GELOSO IN CIMENTO,
OU LE JALOUX A L'EPREUVE,

Opéra-Bouffon en trois Actes, del Signor ANFOSSI,

Avec un Divertiſſement entre le deuxieme & le troiſieme Acte.

Le même ſoir, **B A L.**

Fac-simile of a play-bill of the Royal Academy of Music.

same time that he had to connect the principal front of the Opera in the Rue Saint-Honoré with the buildings of the Palais-Royal, he had to prevent this front indicating a theatre, having the external appearance of one, and, what is more, he had, for the internal arrangements, to come to an understanding with the architect Contant d'Ivry, who was rebuilding on a much larger scale the destroyed portion of the Palais-Royal.

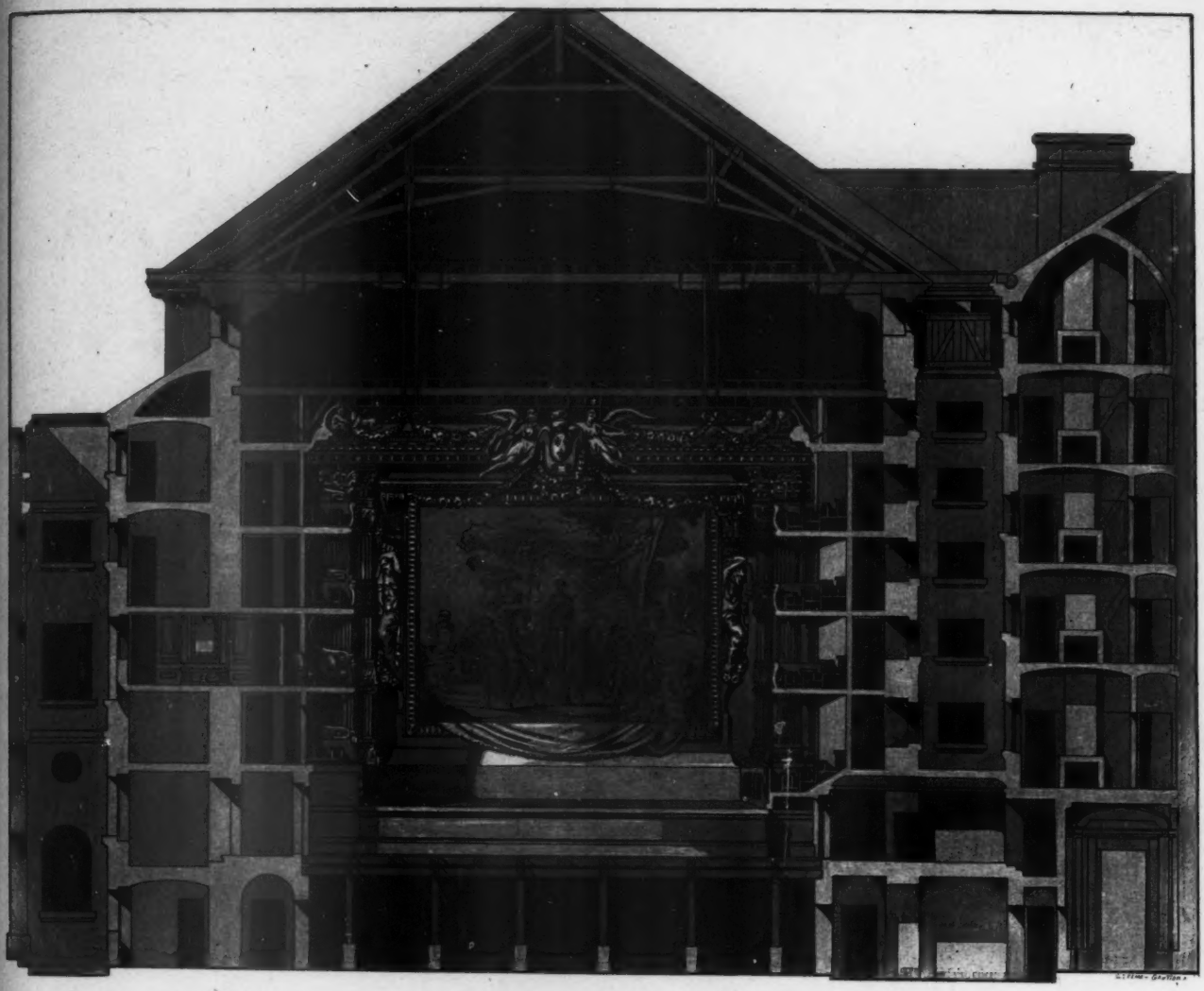
Briefly, the house the City had undertaken to build in four years was finished in the beginning of the year 1770; they had made an estimate of 1,215,174 *livres* and the total cost amounted to 2,381,553 *livres* equivalent, say, to seven millions in our own day. The front, with its whole breadth along the Rue Saint-Honoré, at once very handsome and of extreme simplicity, consisted of a portico with seven wide arcades giving access to a vestibule which occupied the whole breadth of the edifice; thence people passed by three large doors into a circular vestibule, decorated with columns, whence sprung two great curved staircases for ascending to the boxes, and two others leading to the pit. In the inside, the arrangement was the same as in the old house, on a larger scale, and with four tiers of boxes instead of three; but these boxes were all very low, owing to the total height of the edifice having been limited by that of the Palais-Royal buildings which it was bound not to overtop. Same standing pit, same amphitheatre, places that have always existed at the Opera and have only existed there, for they arose out of the arrangement of the royal gala-halls and the raised seats in the Cardinal's saloon; same stage-boxes and same boxes in the house itself, between which were retained the balconies for the dandies and nobles, except that these balconies no longer communicated directly with the stage. Two or three innovations only; on the one hand, Moreau, having sufficient space, had reserved on the right of the stage a tolerably big room where the artists could come and warm themselves and converse, so as to relieve the wings to some slight extent of their crowd of visitors; on the other hand, for the public had been built on the first tier towards the front a fine gallery lit by five windows and opening on a balcony thirty metres long; lastly, in the flutings of the big columns supporting the

proscenium, openings had been made through which the occupants of the stage-boxes could see to the right and left of them without being seen.

The inauguration of this house took place on the 26th of January, 1770, by a performance of *Zoroastre,* and so great was the crowd that the takings amounted to 5,223 francs, 10 centimes, notwithstanding that the officers of the guards, the directors, and officials of the municipality had had a large number of places allotted to them. To control the crowd and keep the way clear for carriages, it had been found necessary to station a part of the regiment of French Guards from the Pont Royal as far as the Pont-Neuf, and everything went off well out of doors, but there was a great tumult inside. They had issued more tickets than there were places, and the performance suffered from the discomfort and discontent of the spectators : there was no stint of objections to the house, but the extremely transparent costumes of the ballet-girls were voted charming. People soon, however, threw off this unfavourable impression; the new house obtained all suffrages and the architect was not only highly complimented but received in addition, from the City of Paris, always the titular depositary of the Opera patent, a bonus of 50,000 *livres,* that must have consoled him a little for the previous sarcasms.

* * *

The course of theatrical and social life at once began again in the new house as in the old. It was always the fashion to go to the Opera on Fridays, for choice, and, in the summer, a walk in the Tuileries after the performance was so much in vogue that people came from Versailles to Paris on purpose, on the favourite day : "The garden of the Tuileries," writes Burney in 1770, "offers an enchanting view; in the summer, from seven to eight in the evening, after the Opera, all the fine world comes to take a walk in the great avenue." It was in this house, on Wednesday, the 16th of June, 1773, that the Dauphine Marie-Antoinette paid her state visit to the Opera with a magnificent ceremonial, in the midst of general enthusiasm : the whole front of the royal box was taken up by the young princess, on account of her immense paniers; the Dauphin, with the Duchess de Chartres, was in the rear, and all the first-tier





boxes on the same side were filled by the ladies of the suite. As for the balcony seats, they were occupied on one side, opposite the Queen, by the prettiest ladies the Marshal de Biron had been able to get together, and, on the other, by the most brilliant nobles of the Court.

Rameau, by his lyric tragedies and opera-ballets, which at least shewed unity of musical style, had rendered the public more fastidious, and thrown discredit on the mixed performances, composed of fragments, and acts having no connection with one another. Managers always had a weakness for performing these operas, comprising three distinct pieces, of which the part that proved most successful could be kept to be joined to others, so as to compose a programme on cheap terms. But the public, after having long fancied these combinations, began to give signs of getting tired of them and shewed a proper preference for sustained works, either in *Opera seria* or *di mezzo carattere,* all the acts of which were written by the same composer. It was not easy, however, to satisfy it, for the Opera, before meeting with Gluck, had to traverse a period of musical dearth, like that which had preceded the advent of Rameau, at the same time having much difficulty in struggling against the growing popularity of the Comédie-Italienne. The first Italian singers who had come to get a hearing in Paris had come out at the Opera in the *Serva padrona,* in 1752; but their success had assumed such proportions, the harm they did to the French singers by their more lively style was so marked, that they had been got rid of as quickly as possible by being expelled. Thereupon the Comédie-Italienne had taken the place of its banished compatriots, and the Opera had to submit to competition with its worn-out repertory, with its singers not so young as they once were, before a public of amateurs with a fancy for novelty and far from contented with the old patched-up operas. Luckily, new singers soon gained the favour of the public, at the same time that important innovations fixed its attention on the ballet and induced it to overlook the poverty of the new operas.

The three supreme *virtuosi* of the period of Rameau : Jéliotte, Chassé, and Mademoiselle Fel retired almost at the same time, but Larrivée and Sophie Arnould appeared just in the nick of time to take the place of

and eclipse the two last, not forgetting Mademoiselle Lemière, afterwards Madame Larrivée, who shone in the parts of *chanteuse légère*. In fact, this line and the baritone were never a single day without brilliant exponents, while at least nine years had to elapse before a worthy successor could be discovered for Jéliotte; meanwhile, Pillot and Muguet filled respectably the place he had abandoned in 1755, and which Legros was to take undisputed possession of in 1764. Larrivée, an ex-hairdresser's assistant, discovered by Rebel, had made his first trial as the high-priest in *Castor et Pollux* on the very day of Jéliotte's retirement, and Sophie Arnould, whose fine voice had impressed the Princess of Modena when she heard her chanting vespers at the Val-de-Grâce, had made her first appearance with prodigious success in the *Provençale* in 1758. This incomparable singer, who passed for the most witty woman of her time and whose reputation for a sharp tongue is a proverb to this day, was soon the sole support of the Royal Academy of Music; she reigned supreme there by the threefold power of her talents, her wit, and her eyes that gave to her anything but perfect face an inexpressible charm. She boasted no extraordinary voice—"'Tis the finest asthma I have ever heard sing," said the Abbé Galiani—but she had countless admirers for her talents as an actress and a tragedy-heroine. A touching voice, a sincere expression were her peculiar qualities and gained her the valued praise of Garrick; she excelled particularly in the "grief-stricken princess" characters, Télaïre, Iphise, Iphigénie and, after having filled this last charming part she had the honour to create the delicious personage of Eurydice in Gluck's masterpiece.

The intimacy of Sophie with the Count de Lauraguais caused great astonishment in society, especially by its persistence and duration; what a fuss, too, when it became known that, one fine day, the singer, having made up her mind to break with him, had taken advantage of the Count's absence to send back to his house the carriages, jewels, lace and children for which she was indebted to him! The Countess de Lauraguais, the gossips added, had kept the children and returned all the rest to Sophie Arnould. The mere freak of a songstress in a laughing mood. In a short time, after a few mutual infidelities, of which a tolerably lengthy



one was in favour of a friendly go-between, Mr. Bertin, treasurer of the Revenue Board, Sophie and Lauraguais were delighted to come together again; whereupon there was more scandal than ever. She was, for the matter of that, of a very philosophical turn, and willingly overlooked the caprices of her dear Lauraguais. When the latter was paying court to Mademoiselle Robbé, a new comer in the ranks of the ballet, and grumbled to Sophie, his natural confidant, at always finding a Knight of Malta at the dancer's—— "A Knight of Malta!" said she, "you may well be afraid of him; he is there on duty to chase away infidels."

She was his confidant in his love affairs, and in return he was her adviser in general. "The Prince d'Hénin is boring me to death," she said, "with his bouquets, his tender speeches, and his crown-pieces."— "Wait a bit," replied Lauraguais, "I will rid you of this tiresome personage." And thereupon he invites four doctors of the Faculty of Paris to a consultation : he asks them whether it is possible to be literally bored to death, and what should be done to avoid so cruel an end, and the four doctors, thinking their answer would refer to one of his relations, signed in all good faith a paper declaring that the sole remedy was to divert the patient, by removing from him everything tending to provoke this dreadful boredom. Armed with this document he calls in a Police-commissary and makes formal complaint against the Prince d'Hénin, who is in process of actually boring Mademoiselle Arnould to death by his continual pursuit; consequently he demands that the Prince be forbidden to visit his mistress, at least so long as she suffers from this malady of boredom, which, according to the Faculty, may be the death of her.

In 1767, Sophie Arnould was on the point of leaving the Opera. Her continual absences tired out the manager, who refused her an extra fee of ten thousand *livres;* thereupon she talked of applying for a retiring pension, and some very high personages indeed had to intervene, so necessary was she, despite her incessant freaks, to the due performance of the repertory. One day she refuses to sing, giving herself out as ill, and goes to the Opera in the evening to take, as she said, a lesson in singing from her under-study, who was Mademoiselle Beaumesnil. Such

a caprice would have cost any one but herself some days at Fort-l'Évêque : the Duke de la Vrillière contents himself with reprimanding her. Then the public gets angry, a cabal is formed, it is decided soundly to hiss the actress, and there is a rush to the Opera. She comes on the stage and begins to sing; instead of hissing her they overwhelm her with applause.

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Sophie Arnould was then almost the sole support of the Opera during the period extending from Rameau to Gluck; but, by her side, there were superior artists in another branch, Noverre and the brothers Gardel, who introduced considerable changes into ballet-dancing. Reviving the early idea of Mademoiselle Sallé, not only did they allow to fall into discredit the mask, paniers, *tonnelets,* and other absurd ballet-dancing "properties," but they made efforts to combine with the ballet-pantomime an element of dramatic action; they were not content with a meaningless string of *tambourins, chaconnes, musettes,* etc., thrown in according as such and such an artist excelled in such and such a step and as, having more or less seniority, he had to come on more or less late in the evening. "My real glory is to have created the ballet of action," proudly writes Noverre. And indeed, he contributed to it more than any one, even taking into account the first experiments of the Sallé. Vestris had already discarded the mask in pantomime, while retaining it for operatic *divertissements,* in which its disuse would have been much more difficult, it being then the fashion among amateurs like Helvetius and the Bailli du Roullet, to mingle with the crowd on the opera stage in masks, a keen pleasure for themselves and a great diversion for the spectators, who discussed their names and sought to recognize them under the swollen features of Winds or Tritons. It was Maximilien Gardel who attempted this last reform and who succeeded in effecting it, one evening that he had to take Vestris' place without notice, in his dance as Apollo in *Castor et Pollux;* from that day the mask was abandoned by all the principals and retained only by representatives of the Shades, Winds and Furies among the rank-and-file.



Peint par J. C. de Mr [illegible] Gravé par de Rosse

Louis Magdelene Lany Pensionaire du Roi,

Née a Paris le 19. Novembre 1733. Reçue à l'Académie Royale de Musique en Novembre 1748 et retirée en Avril 1767.

Graces, quittes Cythere
Venés sur ce gazon.
Pour danser et pour plaire,
Venés de la Bergere
Prendre leçon

Tolone Lirique, Acte de la Danse, Scene 4

The corps de ballet then included some exceptionally great artists. Besides Vestris senior, who will say of his son : "Auguste is cleverer than I, as is natural enough; he has Gaëtan Vestris for a father, an advantage that nature has denied me," there were also the two Gardels, there was Mademoiselle Lany an excellent dancer, who was the first to cross the feet six times in an *entrechat,* there was Mademoiselle Lyonnois, as seductive as could be, who ventured on the *gargouillade,* a brilliant and difficult dance, usually reserved for men, in a *pas de deux* between Hatred and Despair—the *gargouillade* was then peculiar to the dance of demons, as it was intended to portray Terror;—there were also Mademoiselle Peslin and Mademoiselle Heinel; there was above all Mademoiselle Allard, so gay and pleasing on the stage. She still belonged to the ballet of the Comédie-Française, when she bore Vestris that incomparable son, Auguste Vestris, called by the compound name of his parents Vestr' Allard, the *Dieu de la Danse;* she had entered on a long but stormy intimacy with the Duke de Mazarin at the end of which the latter was thrown down stairs by his rival Louis-Joseph de Bourbon-Condé, whom he had caught in his fair charmer's company. She subsequently attached herself to Bontemps, a groom of the royal chambers, who was for some months one of the managers of the Academy of Music, and when the latter died, she conceived such violent grief that she refused to take her turn of performing for six weeks. A wealthy and titled German falls in love with her and threatens to murder her and then to kill himself if she refuses to marry him; but the dancer calls in the aid of the police, and sets them to guard over his life and virtue; the foreigner prudently retires, and the left-handed widow is allowed to go on weeping for Bontemps at her ease.

For that matter, about the time of the beginning of Louis the Sixteenth's reign and of the sentimental pastorals of Trianon, certain Opera dancers became tender and languorous, faithful and impassioned. It is no longer a case of caprices of a day, of libertinism converted into a rule of life, as in the time of the Regency, or during the early years of Louis XV; the influence of Diderot even acts upon actresses, who pride themselves on their constancy and take their love affairs seriously. A mere figurante,

named Basse, herself induces her lover to contract an advantageous marriage, refuses everything his family offers her as a reward for her devotion, and when she has made sure of her children being cared for, she retires to a Barnabite convent, where the whole town is present when she takes the veil. A charming dancer, Mademoiselle Duperrey, aspired to a legitimate union with her comrade Dauberval. On this lady-killer's refusal she flies to conceal her love and confusion in a convent. And does not Mademoiselle Peslin, so famous for the precision of her steps and the vigour of her muscles, hasten, in spite of formal prohibition and without leave, to rejoin her lover, the Marquis de Fleury, as soon as she learns through the Duke de Chartres that he has fought a duel with an officer of the Touraine regiment and is severely wounded?

The noble and superb Heinel, who came from Bayreuth, where she was born, passing through an intermediate stage at the Vienna Opera, had more fancy for change. "She is a heavenly creature for grace and nobility," wrote her compatriot Grimm. "To see her, I won't say dance, but walk on the stage, is alone worth the money you pay at the Opera door." The Count de Lauraguais, to touch the dancer's heart, offered her thirty thousand *livres* for herself, twenty thousand for a brother she was very fond of and whose fortune she was anxious to make, a superb set of furniture, a carriage, etc. The dancer accepted the homage of an adorer who expressed himself so prettily; unfortunately, she suffered from a skin disease, which she passed on to her new lord and master : she turned, they said, a Count de Lauraguais into a Prince de *Galles*. She had begun by being extremely intimate with Gaëtan Vestris, then professional jealousy separated them; some rather unsavoury proceedings followed, insults even, after the public had taken sides with one or the other; so that Mademoiselle Heinel was forced to complain to the authorities. The minister bade Vestris apologize to his comrade; at once the public, always hostile to the government, took up the cudgels for the male dancer, whom they had begun by hissing, and overwhelmed him with applause. To cut the story short, the two artists glared at one another for a fairly long time like two china dogs, then made it up so effectually that they ended by becoming man and wife.

Then there was another one who was a sort of philosopher in satin shoes, a free-thinker in short petticoats, a certain Théodore, deeply imbued with the theories of Jean-Jacques, who, before joining the Opera, had written, they say, to the author of *Émile,* to ask his advice as to the conduct she should observe in that dangerous profession. She was an accomplished dancer and a good-natured woman, absorbed in reading and only moderately devoted to her art, that brought her, nevertheless, brilliant successes, for this girl, who had only taken up dancing to please Lany, her professor, had at once gained all suffrages, such grace and lightness had she, such frolic and gaiety. All her comrades were fond of her and yet, one day, she fought with one of them, with the "Pastoral Beaumesnil," so named not on account of her character, but because she excelled in shepherdess parts. Théodore considered herself aggrieved by the singer and sent her a challenge; a meeting was arranged at the Porte-Maillot, whither they repaired dressed in riding-habits, provided with pistols, escorted by seconds in due form: Mesdemoiselles Fel and Charmoy, Peslin and Guimard—— They take aim, pull the trigger—— and the pistols hang fire, whereupon the seconds burst out a-laughing and the rivals fall into each other's arms. But the greatest of Théodore's successes, during her brief and brilliant career, is that of having contrived to hold fast the inconstant and seductive Dauberval, to whom she had lost her heart in spite of philosophy: Dauberval, the darling of all the women, passing from swart to fair, used to carry on a score of love affairs at a time; Dauberval, equally petted by the Court ladies, who doted on him, and by the great nobles, who treated him with affectionate familiarity; Dauberval, the successful rival of the King in the good graces of the Dubarry, who arranged a subscription for the purpose of paying his debts and keeping him in France; Dauberval, who wriggled and twisted and distorted himself with a grace by no means common, and played a thousand tricks on the stage which the whole house, mightily applauded—— And when the philosophic ballet girl, by dint of constancy, had melted the barbarian's heart, they were joined together in the most sacred union and made an excellent married couple up to the end of their lives: where may not happiness be found!

* * *

But all these celebrities of the ballet and the world of gallantry paled before the Guimard. She was an admirable dancer, light and elegant rather than robust, giving the pantomimic action of her parts with a somewhat mannered grace, but with striking sincerity; a charming woman, short, very thin, with delicate features that long preserved her youthful air for her, a zealous and conscientious artist, who, during twenty-seven years service, was only thrice absent, twice on account of illness, once after the death of her daughter. The real Queen of the Opera, by reason of her overwhelming superiority, displaying in private life unheard-of luxury among the contributors to which were the Marshal Prince de Soubise, M. de Jarente, Bishop of Orléans, and de Laborde, His Majesty's chief groom of the chambers, the Guimard enjoyed throughout her whole career unchanging popularity with the public, whom the dancer enchanted, unbounded credit with the great people, whose heads were turned by the woman. She, more than once, abused the power she owed to her talents, to her relations with exalted personages, to the protection of Marie-Antoinette even, who consulted her over and over again about the organisation of her *fêtes*, or the arrangement of her toilet; but she was, on the whole, an excellent woman and an incomparable artist. Did she not, on New Year's Day in 1768, distribute among the poor and the sick,



M.lle GUIMARD dans le ballet du Navigateur.

Elle unit les vertus, l'esprit et la bonté
A la grace plus belle encor que la beauté!

the six thousand *livres* that the Prince de Soubise had made her a present of, and did she not assist her necessitous comrades with delicacy?

Through M. de Jarente she controlled the church-patronage list *(feuille)* and saw all the clergy in France at her feet. "This little silk-worm ought to be bigger," said Sophie Arnould, "she feeds on such a fine leaf *(feuille)*"—and through the Prince de Soubise she controlled the Royal Hunt, thus her table was always amply furnished with game, not to mention that she made no fuss about granting the artists of the Opera leave to shoot in the royal forests. Whether in the sumptuous mansion she had had built in the Chaussée-d'Antin, or in her delicious country house at Pantin, she gave three supper-parties a week; one for the great nobles, another for artists and men of letters, and finally a third one for her theatrical friends and the most fashionable women of pleasure. In the country as well as in town she had a theatre at her house, managed by the financier Delaborde, wherein she was accustomed for choice to perform risky comedies, and licentious farces. There it was that, with her comrade Dauberval, she ventured on the famous *fricassée,* so shamelessly suggestive, which she was afterwards to go and dance at Court, and which procured her a royal pension. For that matter, she had a wonderful knack of flattering the taste of a dissolute society, and in her theatre at Pantin she had reserved wired-boxes for the decent women who did her the honour to be present at the performance without wishing to be known. So, when she had her Paris mansion built, she gave great prominence to the theatre which would hold about five hundred people, and was solemnly inaugurated, even before the completion of the mansion, by a great *fête* where the greatest nobles elbowed one another, the Duke de Chartres, son of the Duke d'Orléans, and the Count de la Marche, son of the Prince de Conti.

Despite the enormous sums she had command of, the Guimard led so wild a life that the day came when she had to raffle her mansion: she issued two thousand five hundred tickets at the price of one hundred and twenty *livres* each, and the Countess de Lau was the winner of the palace, which she resold shortly afterwards to Perregaux, the banker, for five hundred thousand *livres*. All Paris was agog over this lottery,

just as some months before, when the Guimard had had her arm broken by the fall of a piece of scenery, nothing had been talked of but this accident and the dancer's courage in enduring without a word the painful operation of setting that the surgeon of the Mousquetaires, Guérin, had performed on the spot. And what a fuss there was, later on, when she caught the small-pox, after her great success in the part of *La Rosière* that she had forthwith to give up to Mademoiselle Dorival! What excitement on the occasion of her quarrel, a quarrel of lampoons and insulting pamphlets, with pretty Mademoiselle Dervieux, who, not having succeeded as a dancer, tries with her thread of a voice to sing Colette in the *Devin du Village,* and gains such applause that Dorat the rhymester, always ready to rhyme, tunes his lyre in favour of the new comer. The Guimard is enraged at the news of this poetic faithlessness. A nasty epistle is published, then an infamous satire, then licentious songs, and, to crown all, a caricature, wherein the Guimard is depicted balancing herself airily between her four favourites; the Prince de Soubise, is playing the violin; the Bishop of Orléans the serpent; Dauberval the horn; and Delaborde beats time with a broom. This lively *Concert à Quatre* succeeded in provoking a universal roar of laughter.

ADOLPHE JULLIEN.

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